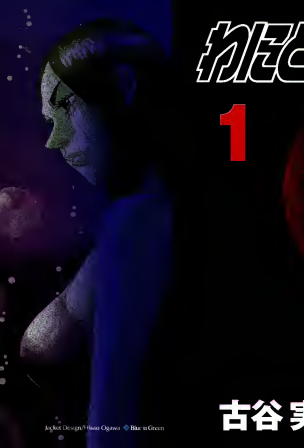

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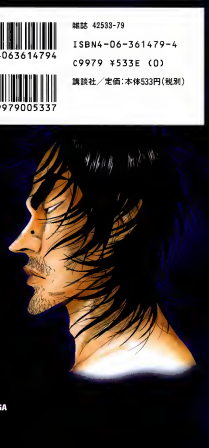

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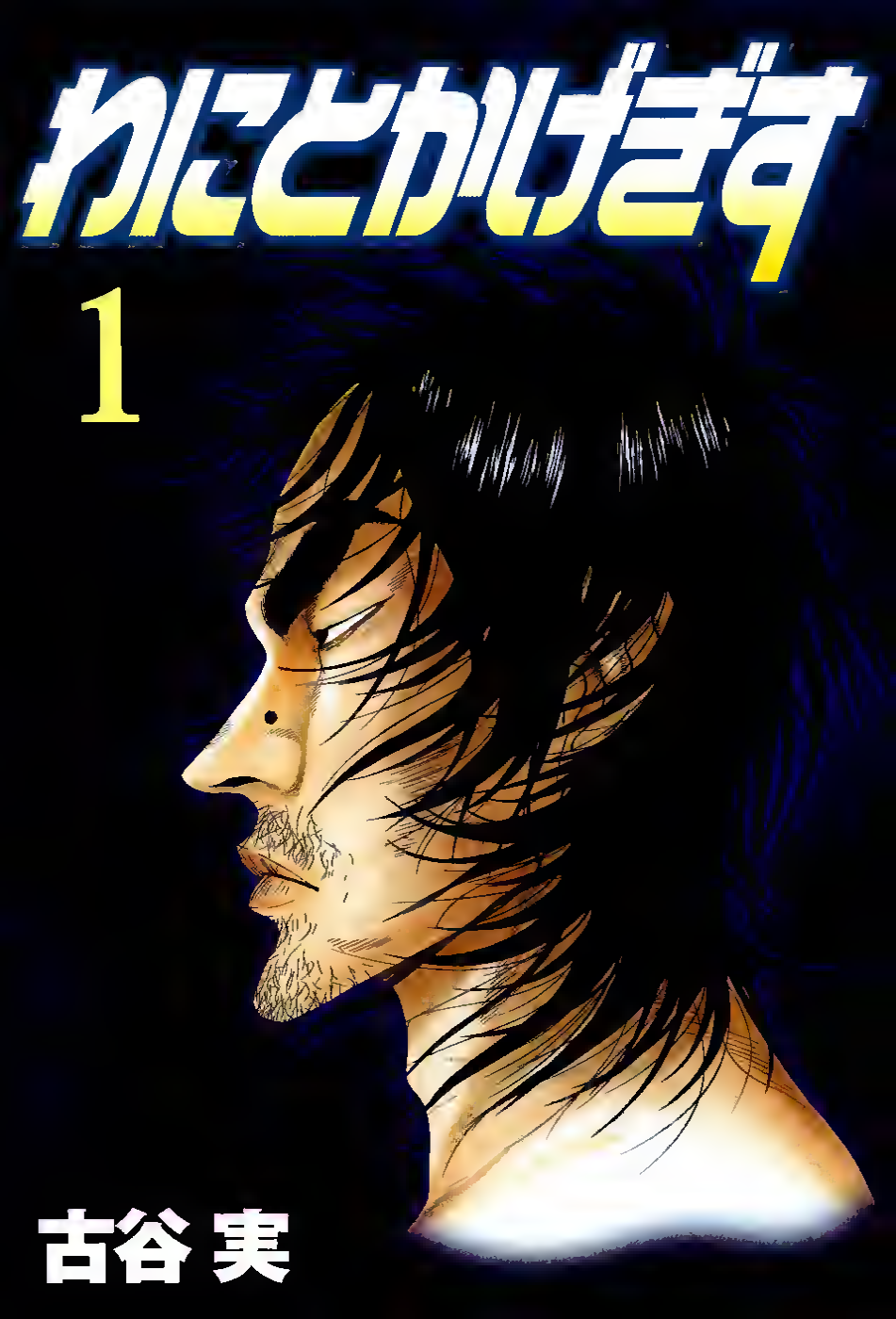
ねだとかげます

1

古谷実

わにとかげぎす

1



古谷実

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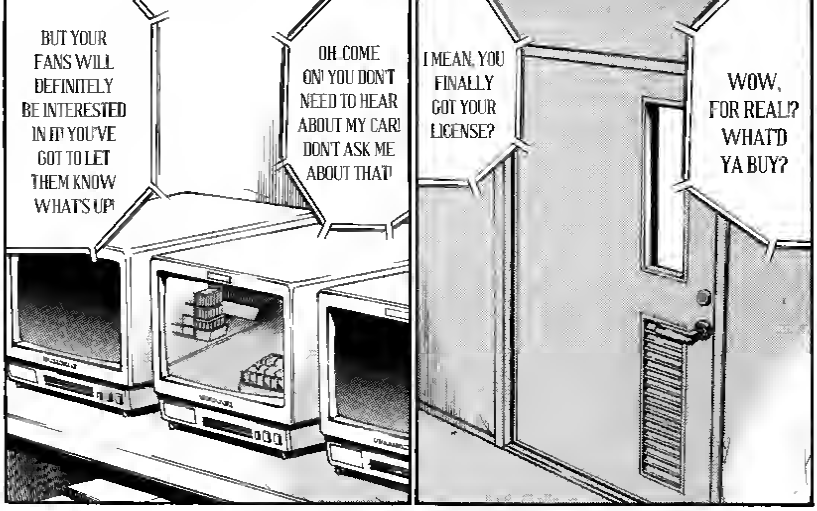
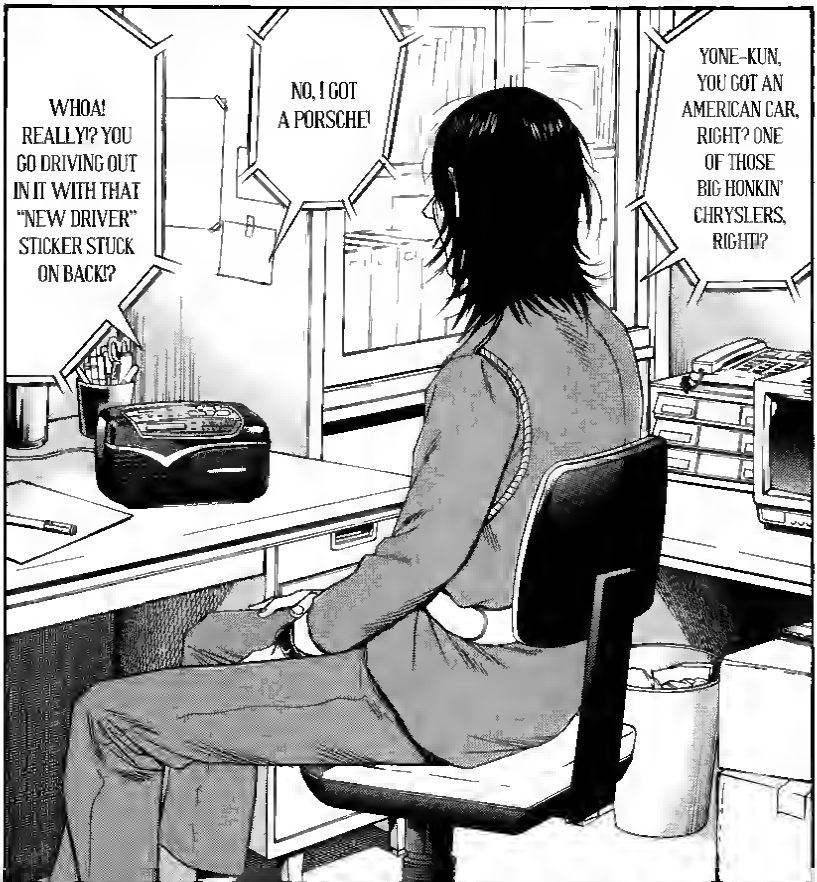
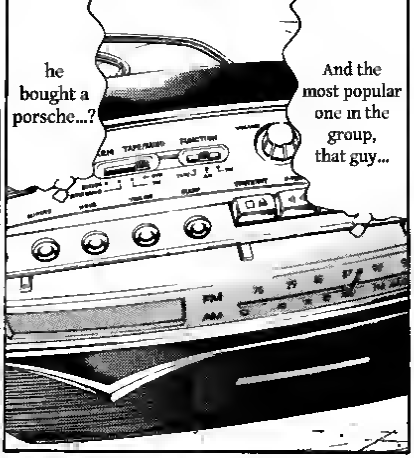
Chapter 1: Awakening


BUT YOUR FANS WILL DEFINITELY BE INTERESTED IN IT! YOU'VE GOT TO LET THEM KNOW WHAT'S UP!
OH COME ON! YOU DON'T NEED TO HEAR ABOUT MY CAR! DON'T ASK ME ABOUT THAT!
I MEAN, YOU FINALLY GOT YOUR LICENSE?
WOW, FOR REAL!? WHAT'D YA BUY?


WHOA! REALLY!? YOU GO DRIVING OUT IN IT WITH THAT "NEW DRIVER" STICKER STUCK ON BACK!?
NO, I GOT A PORSCHE!
YONE-KUN, YOU GOT AN AMERICAN CAR, RIGHT? ONE OF THOSE BIG HONKIN' CHRYSLERS, RIGHT!?

CLICK
REALLY? WHY'S IT EVEN MATTER WHAT I DRIVE!?
I'VE NEVER SEEN A PORSCHE LIKE THAT BEFORE!
HAHAHA, I'M JUST MESSING WITH YOU!
So...
That's the crap they were just talking about on the radio...
that group of kids just now are in a band, and they managed to hit it big with a couple of their stupid songs...

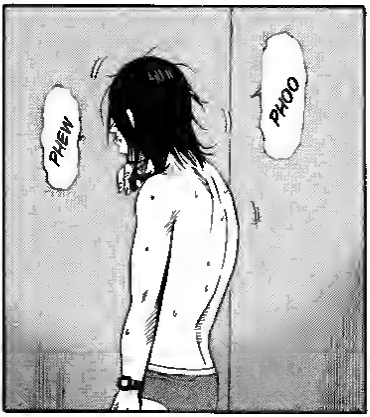

he bought a porsche...?
And the most popular one in the group, that guy...

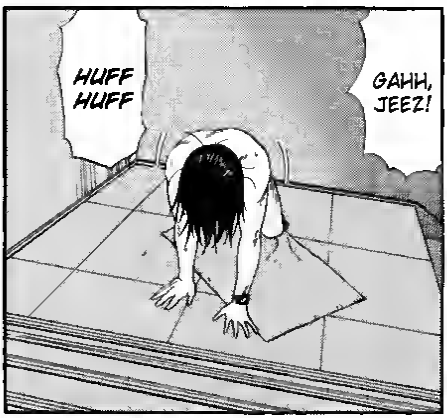
WHEN THEY HAVE TO PRY THAT PORSCHE OUT OF YOUR SORRY HANDS!!!
YOU BETTER HOPE TO GOD ALMIGHTY THAT THE DAY NEVER COMES

SQUEAK
Phew..
I just wished for something bad...
I wished for something bad to happen to someone...
that I don't even know...
It's time to start working on my muscles!!
Oh... While I was spacing out, two hours have passed since I ate!
What if he's a nice guy? I wish I had a bigger heart...

HUFF HUFF
32
33
HUFF HUFF
HUFF
WORKIN' OUT IS AWE-SOME!!
HUFF
HUFF
AND THAT'S WHAT MAKES IT GREAT!!
HUFF
WHAT'S SO GOOD ABOUT IT? IT JUST IS!!
UGH-HHH

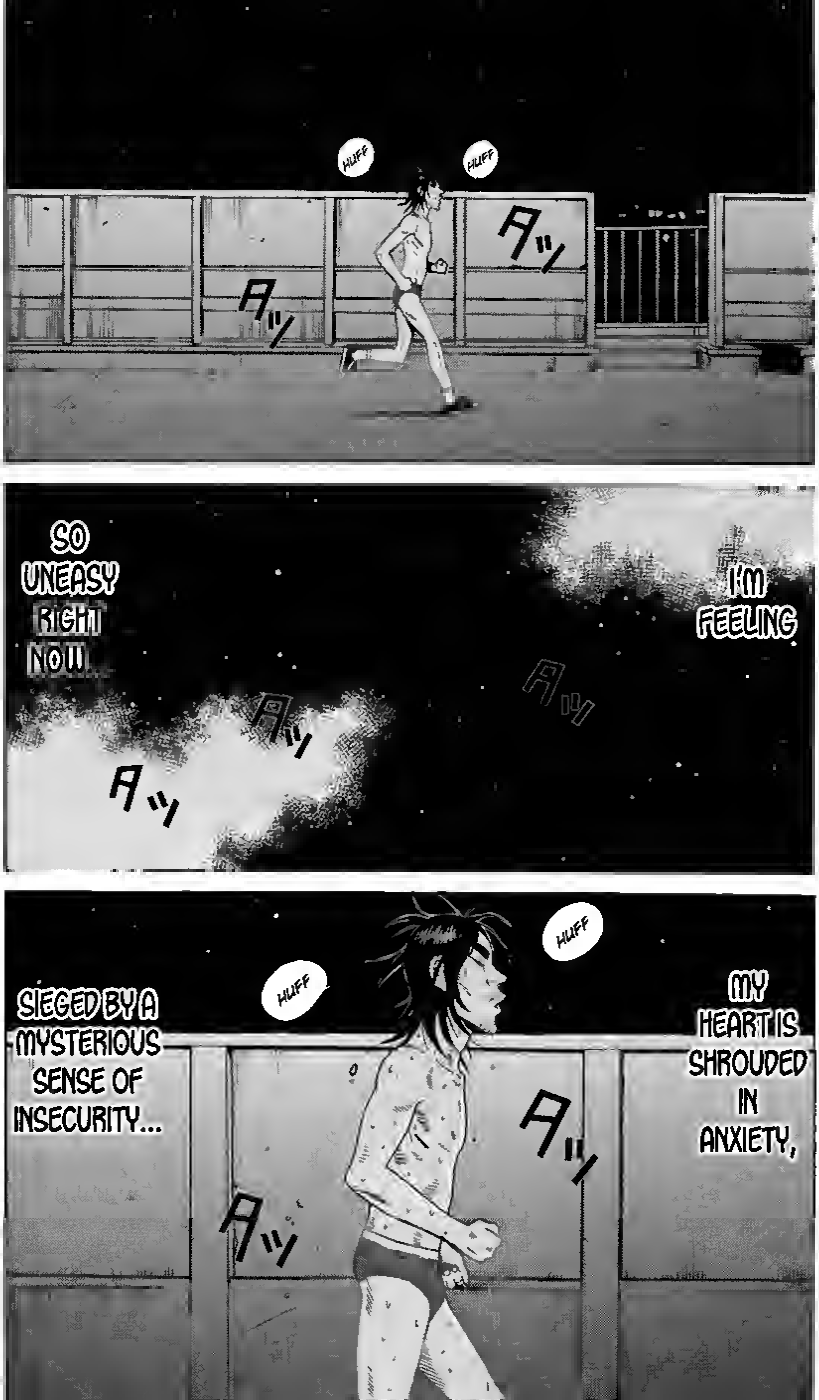
His hair's defying it
Defying it
It doesn't matter if it's popular or not, it's unconditionally cool!
The act of strengthening your body! It's like defying gravity and that's totally what rock and roll is all about in a way!!
VEGA
MASA


PHEW
PHOO

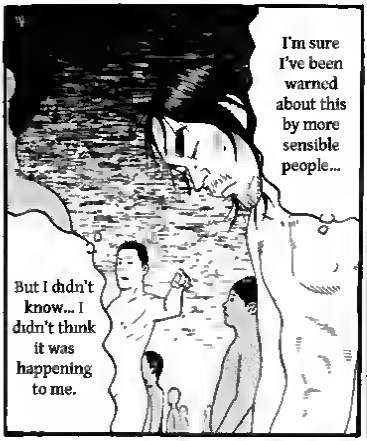

HUFF HUFF
GAHH, JEEZ!

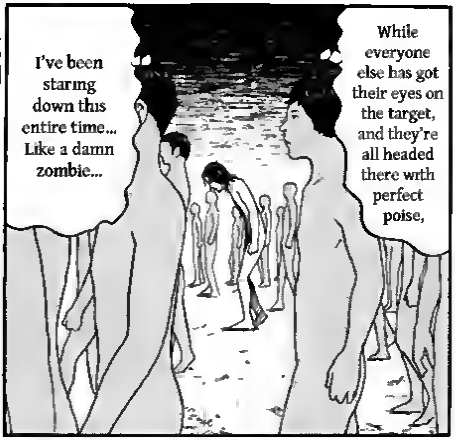
...NOW FOR THE LOWER HALF OF MY BODY.
OKAY...

ON YOUR MARK!
BANG!


HUFF
HUFF
SO UNEASY RIGHT NOW...
I'M FEELING
SIEGED BY A MYSTERIOUS SENSE OF INSECURITY...
MY HEART IS SHROUDED IN ANXIETY,

I'm a fool that has taken each step of my way, looking only at his feet.
Yeah... If I had to put it in words, I'm a fool. On this momentous journey known as life..

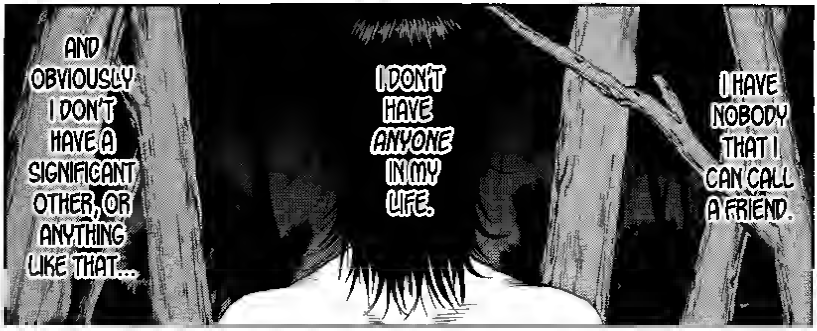

I'm sure I've been warned about this by more sensible people...
But I didn't know... I didn't think it was happening to me.


I've been staring down this entire time... Like a damn zombie...
While everyone else has got their eyes on the target, and they're all headed there with perfect poise,

In the spring of my 32nd year alive... I suddenly became aware of it...
I avoided the difficulty of things being difficult... and spent 32 years sluggishly trudging along.

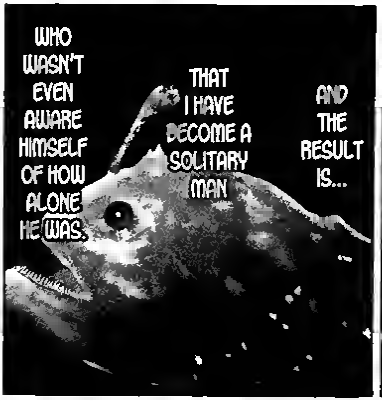
IN AN ETERNITY...
FOR THE FIRST TIME...
I LIFTED MY HEAD AND LOOKED AROUND...
Hmm? Why can't I sense anybody else around me?
COMPLETELY NO IDEA WHERE I WAS ANYMORE!!
AND WHEN I DID, WHAT DID I FIND!? I HAD...

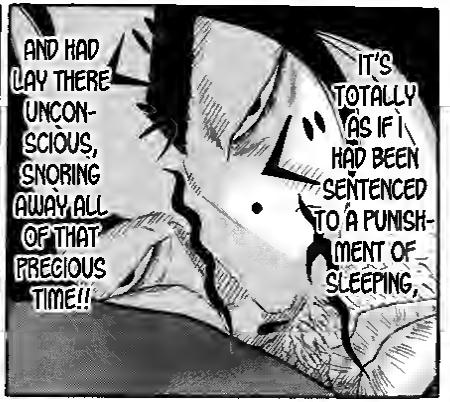
ONLY LAST WEEK!
...I BECAME AWARE OF THIS... UNFORTUNATE TURN OF EVENTS
I WAS STRANDED ON THIS VOYAGE CALLED LIFE!!
I...I WAS STRANDED!


AND OBVIOUSLY I DON'T HAVE A SIGNIFICANT OTHER, OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT...
I DON'T HAVE ANYONE IN MY LIFE.
I HAVE NOBODY THAT I CAN CALL A FRIEND.

I WASN'T AWARE OF ANY-THING!!
NOT ONE THING!
I WASN'T THIN-KING ABOUT ANY-THING AT ALL!!
Okay... let's take an honest look at things here.
Why didn't I notice it this entire time...? What the hell was going on in my head?
ｱｯ
ｱｯ
ｱｯ

AND EVEN LONG AFTER I BECAME AN ADULT!!
WHEN I WAS A KID, WHEN I WAS A TEEN,
BASICALLY, I HAD BEEN ASLEEP AT HOME THIS ENTIRE TIME!!

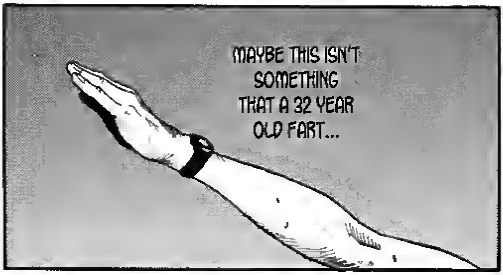

WHO WASN'T EVEN AWARE HIMSELF OF HOW ALONE HE WAS.
THAT I HAVE BECOME A SOLITARY MAN
AND THE RESULT IS...

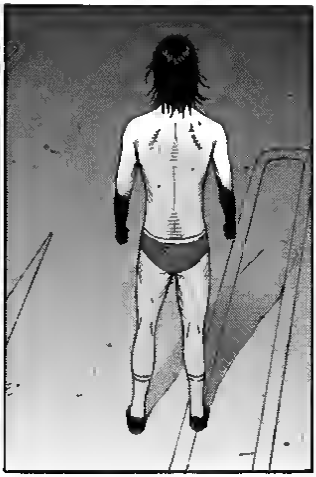

AND HAD LAY THERE UNCONSCIOUS, SNORING AWAY ALL OF THAT PRECIOUS TIME!!
IT'S TOTALLY AS IF I HAD BEEN SENTENCED TO A PUNISHMENT OF SLEEPING,

HAA
But... now...
I think of that loneliness as a great transgression...
HAA

They're heavy sins...
...Even if it was uncon sciously, I've committed these crimes for so long...
HAA
HAA
Not to mention how I only ran away from hardships...
SO I BEG OF YOU... ERR, HOW SHOULD I PHRASE THIS...? IF I HAD TO PUT IT SIMPLY...
BUT PLEASE LISTEN TO WHAT I HAVE TO SAY... EVEN NOW I INTEND TO ATONE FOR THEM...
OH! A SHOOTING STAR!!
SPARKLE

GIVE ME A FRIEND.
PLEASE GRANT MY WISH...


MAYBE THIS ISN'T SOMETHING THAT A 32 YEAR OLD FART...

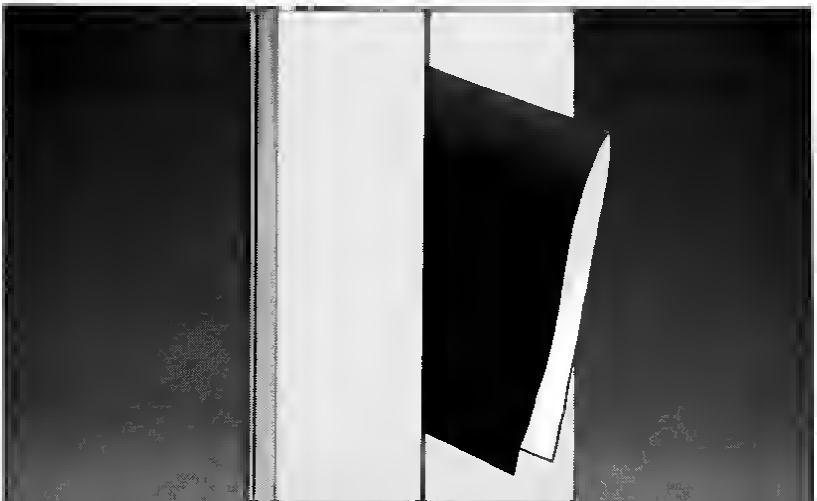


SHOULD BE WISHING UPON A SHOOTING STAR WHILE IN HIS UNDEWOOS FOR, BUT...

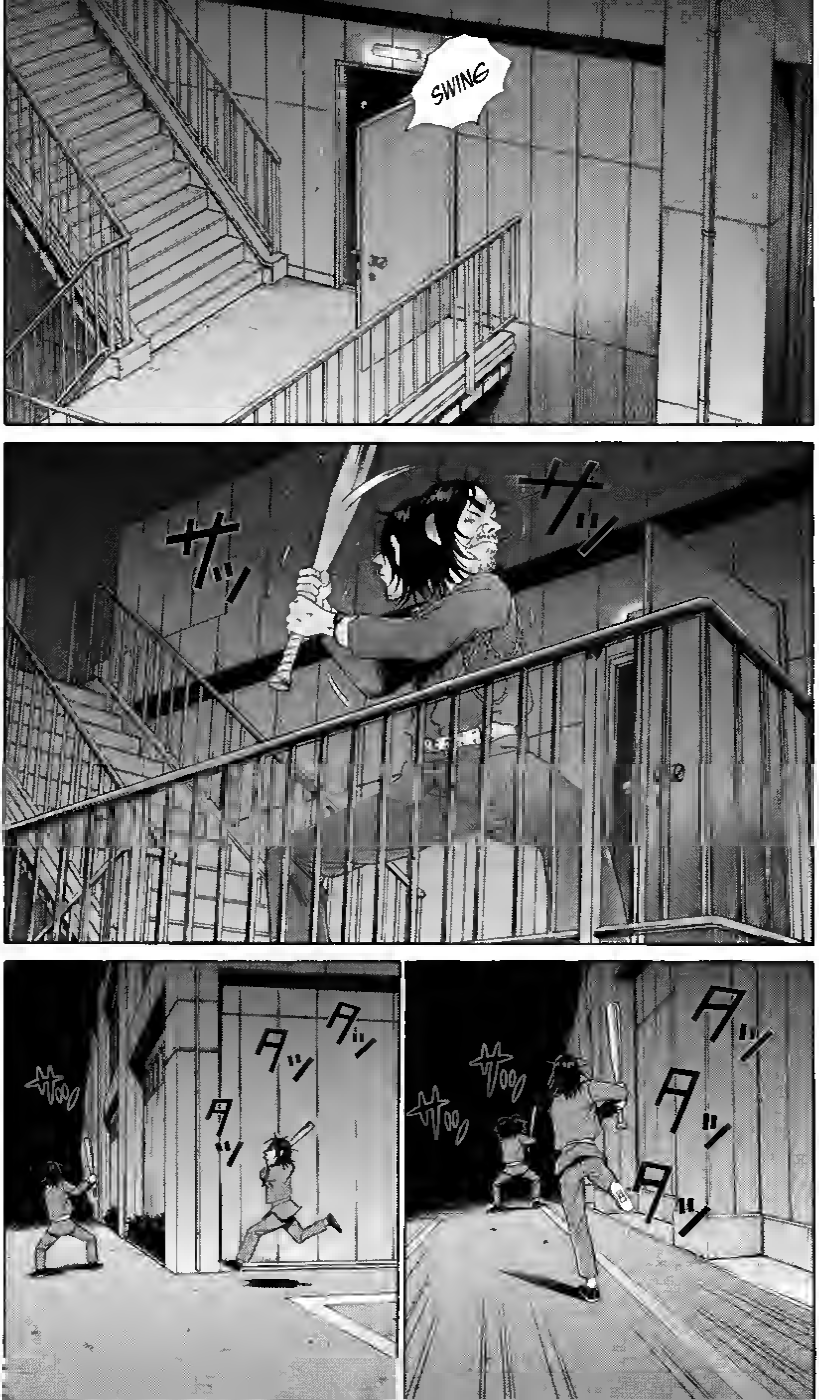
I'VE GOT LITTLE OTHER CHOICE...
WITH THINGS AS THEY ARE,
IT'S SO LONELY!!!
I FOUND SOMETHING I TRULY DESIRED.
FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE,
GAH!!

AND NOW THE TIME HAS COME TO PAY IT ALL BACK AT ONCE.
I JUST HAVE TO DO IT.... I'VE RUN UP A HEAVY TAB.
CLICK
I WONDER IF I'M REALLY CAPABLE OF THAT...?
NOW I JUST NEED TO PUT IN AN EQUAL AMOUNT OF EFFORT IN IT.... OR MAYBE EVEN MORE...

HM?

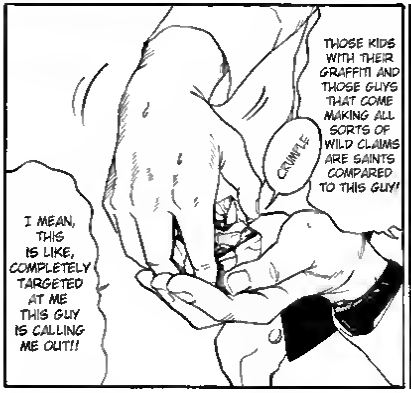


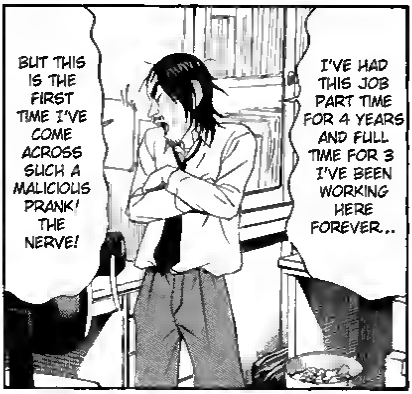
This wasn't here a moment ago, you know!
.. Hey, what the hell is this supposed to be...?
HRM-MM?
RUSTLE
TO THE SECURITY GUARD,
WITHIN THE NEXT YEAR
YOU WILL GO CRAZY AND DIE.

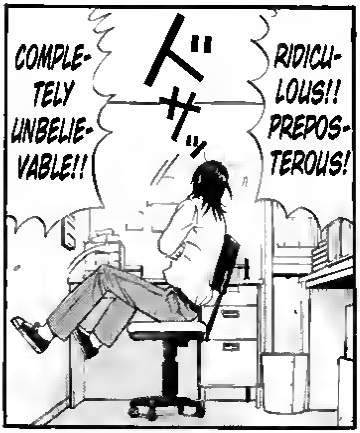

SWING
ナッ
ナッ
タッ
タッ
タッ
タッ
タッ
タッ

SLAM
TO THE SECURITY GUARD,
WITHIN THE NEXT YEAR
YOU WILL GO CRAZY
AND DIE.
Four

IT'S JUST A BAD PRANK!
OH, I GET IT... THIS MUST BE ONE OF THOSE...


I MEAN, THIS IS LIKE, COMPLETELY TARGETED AT ME THIS GUY IS CALLING ME OUT!!
CRUMPLE
THOSE KIDS WITH THEIR GRAFFITI AND THOSE GUYS THAT COME MAKING ALL SORTS OF WILD CLAIMS ARE SAINTS COMPARED TO THIS GUY!

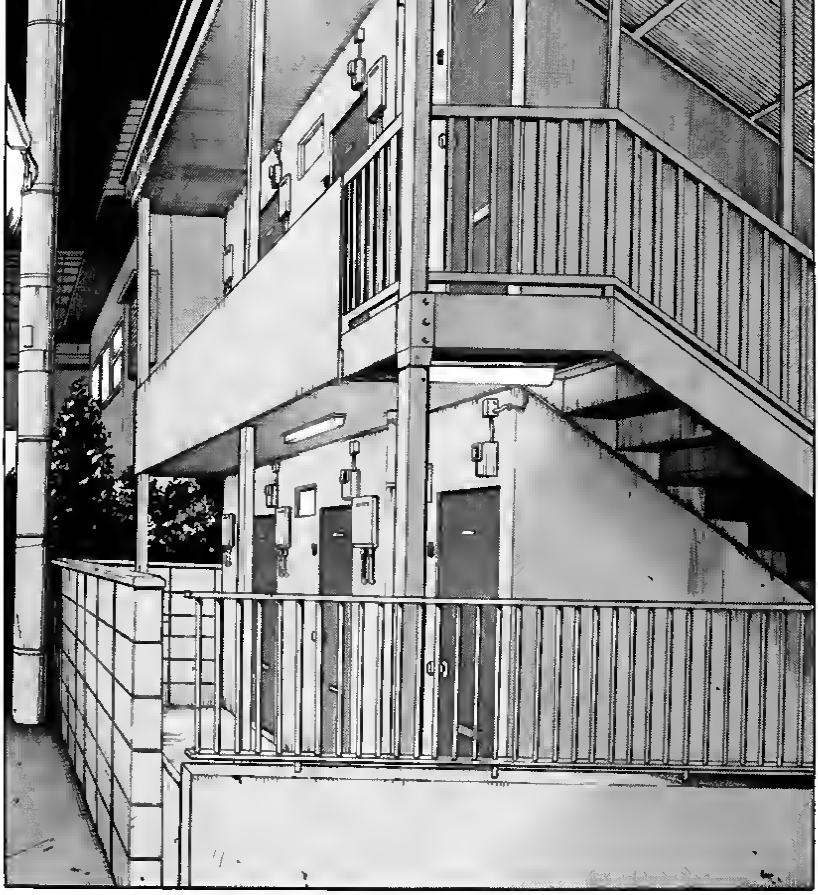

BUT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE COME ACROSS SUCH A MALICIOUS PRANK! THE NERVE!
I'VE HAD THIS JOB PART TIME FOR 4 YEARS AND FULL TIME FOR 3 I'VE BEEN WORKING HERE FOREVER..


COMPLE-TELY UNBELIE-VABLE!!
ギッ
RIDICU-LOUS!! PREPOS-TEROUS!

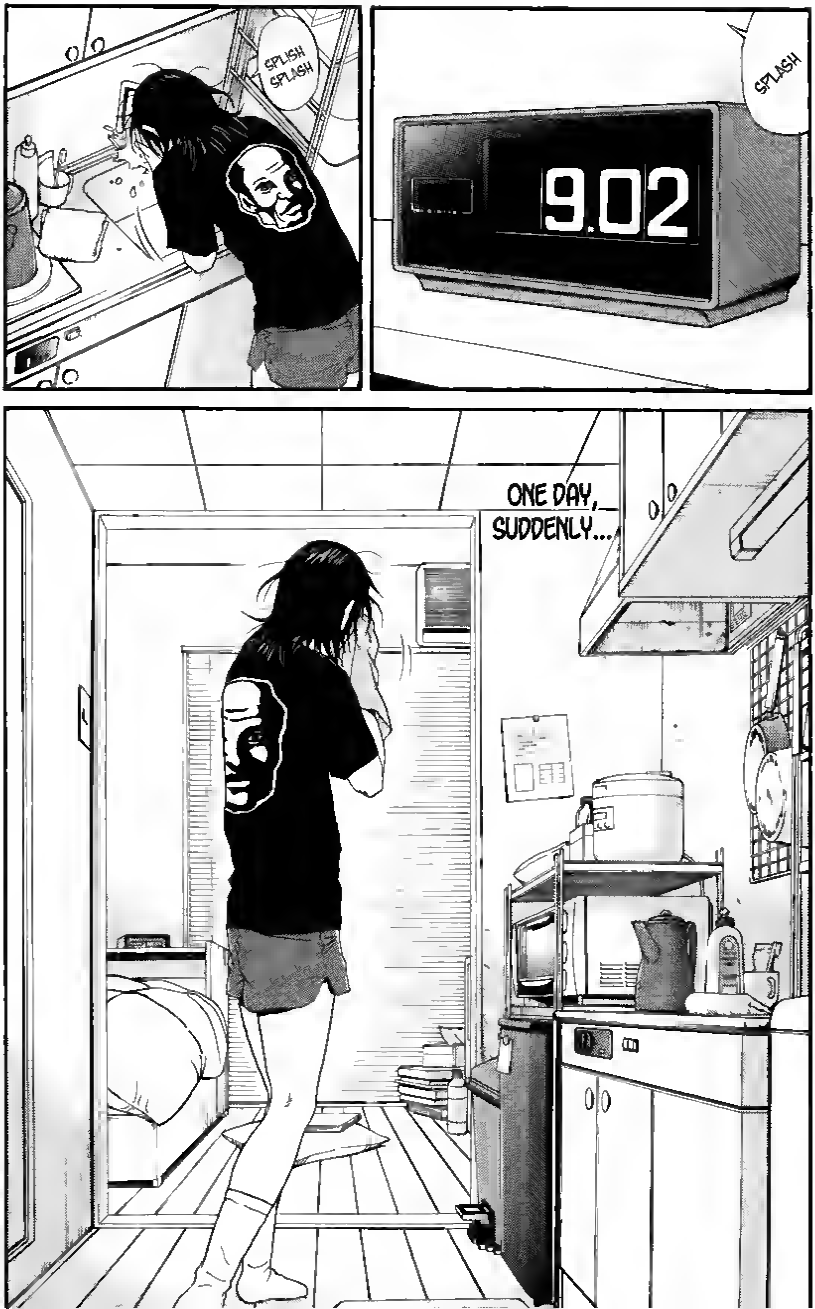
TOSS
WELL, YOU KNOW WHAT I THINK ABOUT THIS CRAP!? TO THE TRASH WITH YOU!!

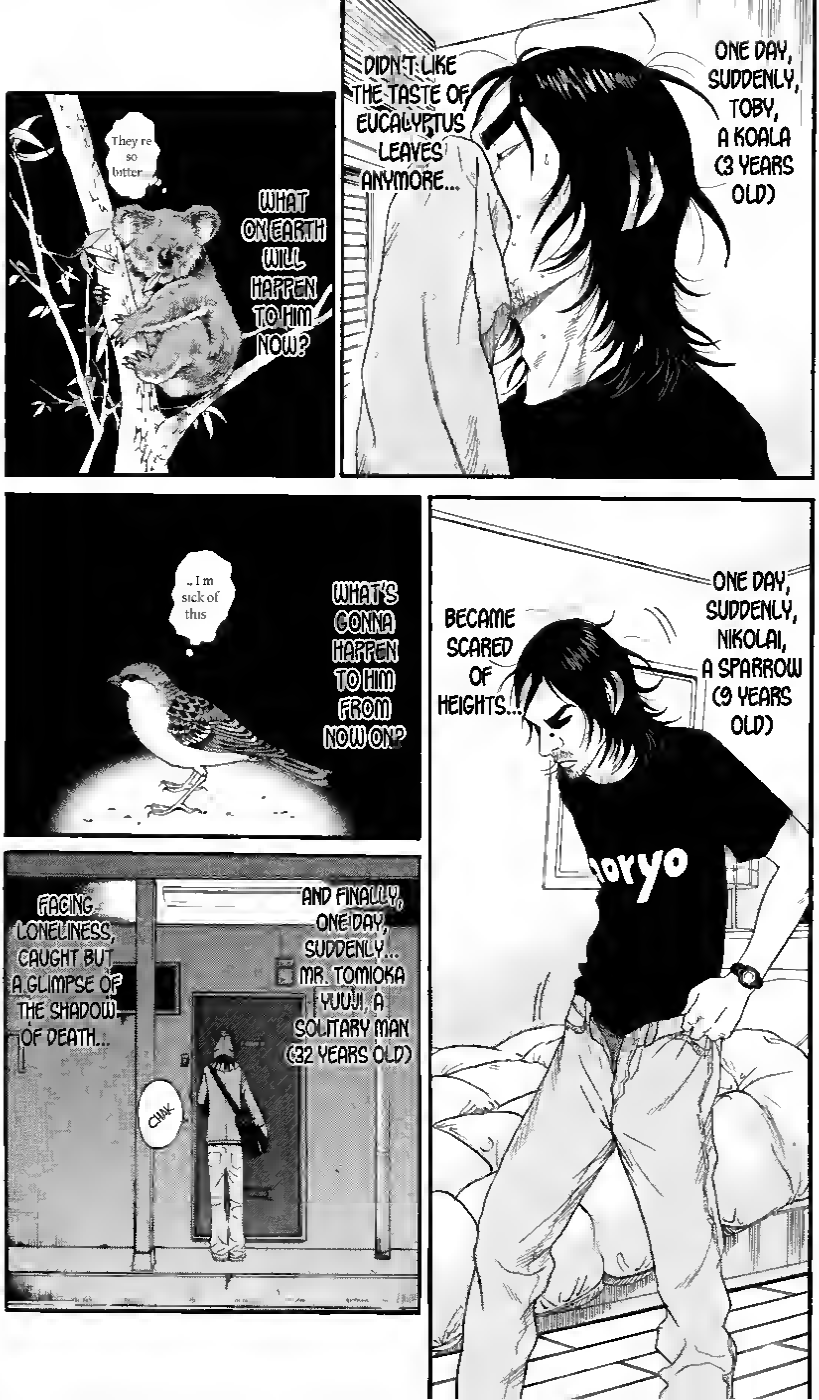
Safety starts with security of the heart.
I'M SO FREAKIN' SCARED...
I... I'M SCARED...
Please... don't do that ever again...

Chapter 2: Shaddw by the Winddw



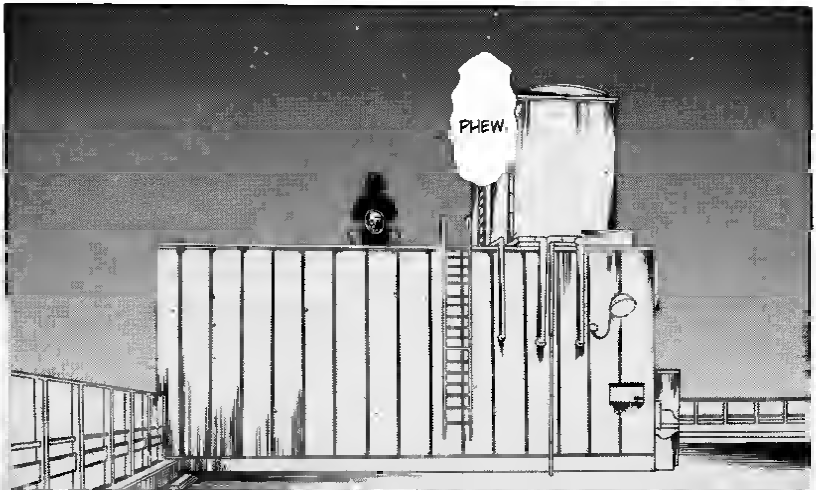
102
Tomioka
SPLASH


SPLISH SPLASH
SPLASH
9.02
ONE DAY,_ SUDDENLY...


They're so bitter...
WHAT ON EARTH WILL HAPPEN TO HIM NOW?
DIDN'T LIKE THE TASTE OF EUCALYPTUS LEAVES ANYMORE...
ONE DAY, SUDDENLY, TOBY, A KOALA (3 YEARS OLD)
.. I'm sick of this
WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN TO HIM FROM NOW ON?
BECAME SCARED OF HEIGHTS...
ONE DAY, SUDDENLY, NIKOLAI, A SPARROW (9 YEARS OLD)
FACING LONELINESS, CAUGHT BUT A GLIMPSE OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH...
AND FINALLY, ONE DAY, SUDDENLY... MR. TOMIOKA YUUJI, A SOLITARY MAN (32 YEARS OLD)
CHIRP

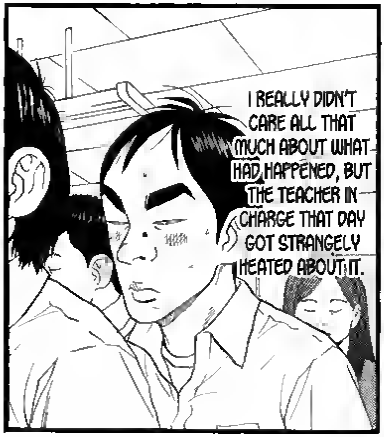
IS GOING TO HAPPEN TO ME?
WHAT THE HELL...
IT'S REALLY NOT THE TIME TO BE WORRIED ABOUT THAT.
IT ALMOST LEFT ME CRYING FOR A SECOND BACK THERE, BUT I'M FINE NOW...
THAT STRANGE LETTER THAT WAS DELIVERED 3 DAYS AGO,
..."Yo, how're you?" ..."How about you and I talk about some stuff?"
..."Hey, you... You wanna be friends with me?"

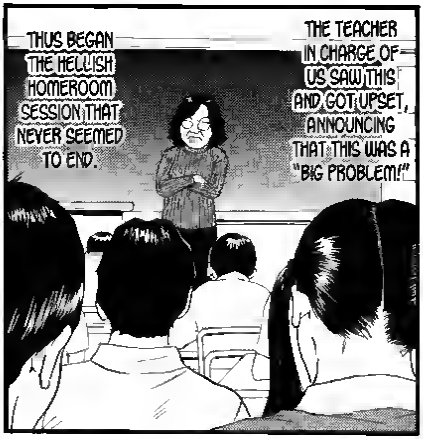
POOK POOK
FS
ホームセンター
生鮮市場

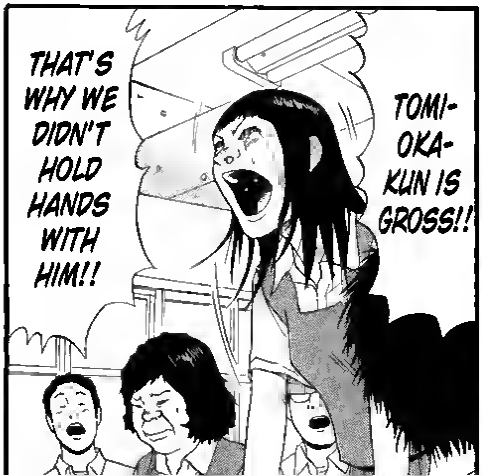

PHEW.

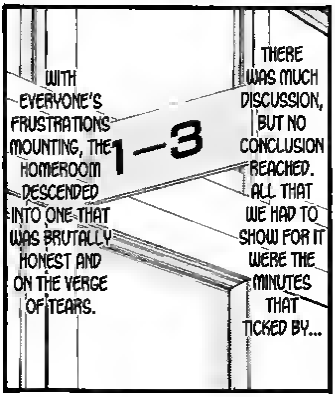
must each have their own drama...
Hmm... Each one of those houses over there...
Honestly, the 32 years that I've lived probably wouldn't even measure up to a week in Yabuki Joe's life.
If I wrote an autobiography, it'd be so thin. The user manual for a microwave would probably be longer...
No way there could be... since I spent all my precious time sideways, sleeping it away..
...There was no drama in my own life...
Something that caught everyone's attention and had the atmosphere of drama ever so slightly...
No, there was... something that happened...
OH!

I was the only one the girls in class wouldn't hold hands with when they were dancing. It became known as the "Tomioka-kun hover hand folk dance incident."
That's right... It happened in my first year at middle school. During the folk dance on field day...


I REALLY DIDN'T CARE ALL THAT MUCH ABOUT WHAT HAD HAPPENED, BUT THE TEACHER IN CHARGE THAT DAY GOT STRANGELY HEATED ABOUT IT.


THUS BEGAN THE HELLISH HOMEROOM SESSION THAT NEVER SEEMED TO END.
THE TEACHER IN CHARGE OF US SAW THIS AND GOT UPSET, ANNOUNCING THAT THIS WAS A "BIG PROBLEM!"


THAT'S WHY WE DIDN'T HOLD HANDS WITH HIM!!
TOMI-OKA-KUN IS GROSS!!


1-3
WITH EVERYONE'S FRUSTRATIONS MOUNTING, THE HOMEROOM DESCENDED INTO ONE THAT WAS BRUTALLY HONEST AND ON THE VERGE OF TEARS.
THERE WAS MUCH DISCUSSION, BUT NO CONCLUSION REACHED. ALL THAT WE HAD TO SHOW FOR IT WERE THE MINUTES THAT TICKED BY...

In the end, we came to this ridiculous conclusion of "holding hands as much as you're able to," and it came to a close—
YEAH! YOU KNOW WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT, BUT YOU'RE ACTING LIKE YOU DON'T!!
OH, COME ON! I'M SURE YOU HAVE PEOPLE THAT YOU JUST DON'T WANT TO BE AROUND!!
WHAT'S SO GROSS ABOUT TOMIOKA-KUN!? PLEASE EXPLAIN THAT TO ME!
Ah... Jeez...
She was a Christian and she always looked like she was sparkling...
The kind girl who was the only one that held my hand and danced with me that day...
Tsuka-moto Chisato san...
..But then there was Tsukamoto-san...
I'm sure she's become a wonderful adult... and is happily married...
Even now I can remember her beautiful eyes from back then .. I remember thinking to myself, "She's so pretty..."

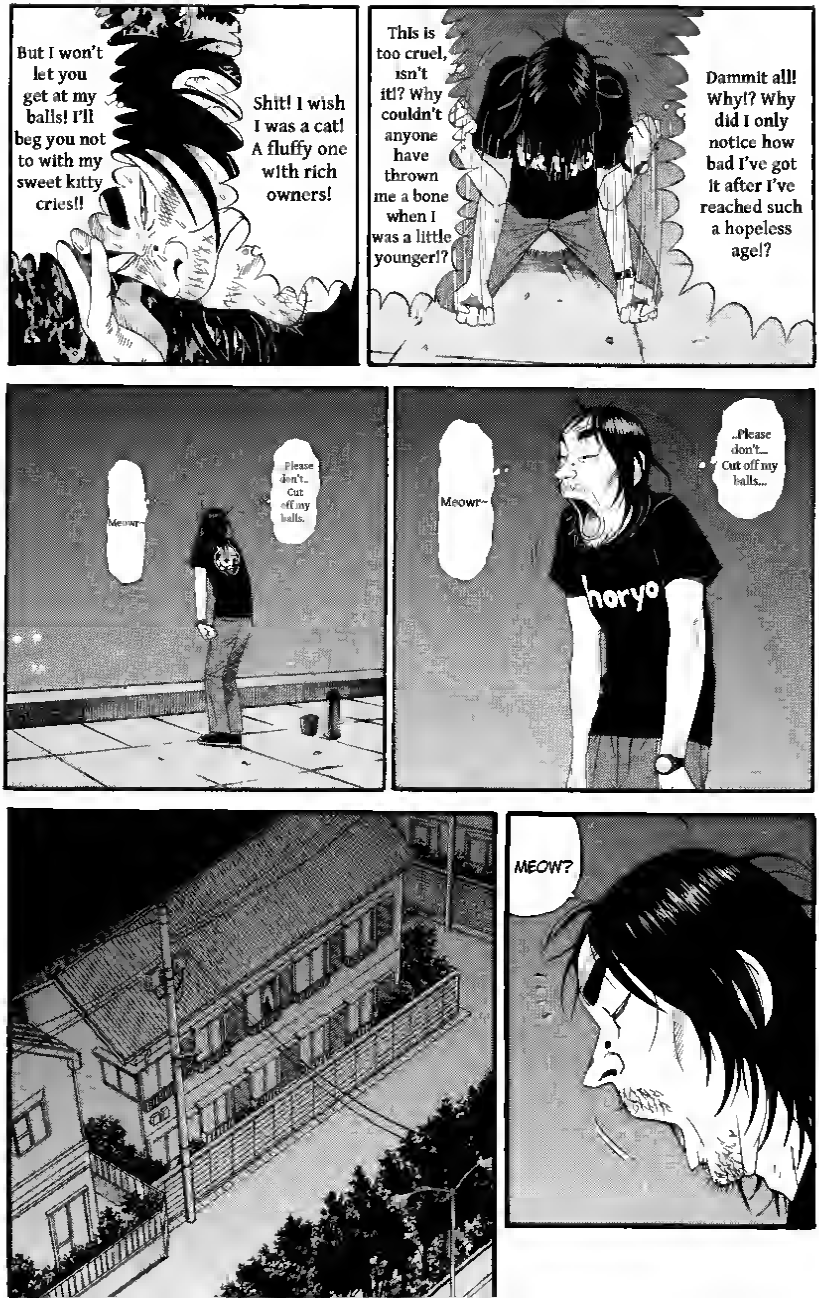
BUT THERE'S NOBODY HERE...

IT SUITS ME PRETTY WELL...
...I LIKE THIS JOB THAT I HAVE...
harya

AND THAT MEANS THERE'S NO WAY ANYTHING DRAMATIC WILL EVER HAPPEN...
IF THERE'S NOBODY HERE, THEN I CAN'T MAKE ANY FRIENDS...

WHAT THE HECK SHOULD I DO!!?
WHAT SHOULD I DO?

THAT SEEMS ROUGH... IT'S PRETTY RICKY CONSIDERING HOW OLD I AM.
SHOULD I CHANGE MY LINE OF WORK NOW OF ALL TIMES, JUST SO I CAN MEET PEOPLE?


But I won't let you get at my balls! I'll beg you not to with my sweet kitty cries!!
Shit! I wish I was a cat! A fluffy one with rich owners!
This is too cruel, isn't it!? Why couldn't anyone have thrown me a bone when I was a little younger!?
Dammit all! Why!? Why did I only notice how bad I've got it after I've reached such a hopeless age!?
Meowr~
Please don't... Cut off my balls.
Meowr~
..Please don't... Cut off my balls...
MEOW?

HRM?

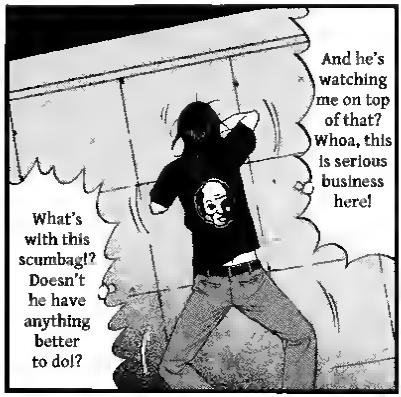
Is that .. a person...?

...What's that over there in the middle of the window...?
...A person?
haruo

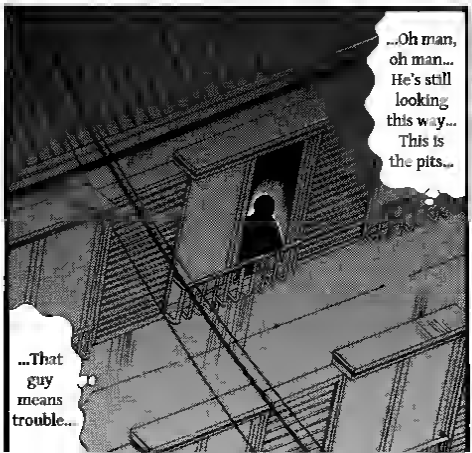
...Ah... It's moving...
It's a person after all...

Hmmm... He's looking over here...
...He's like... totally staring this way...
Soooo, who's weirder? The security guard who's up on the roof slacking off when it's just past 3 am...
Or the person who's watching him with the lights turned off...?
THE PERSON WHO'S WATCHING HIM, RIGHT!?

That guy's bad news... That's something the unsavory types would do... I need to exercise caution here...


What's with this scumbag!? Doesn't he have anything better to do!?
And he's watching me on top of that? Whoa, this is serious business here!

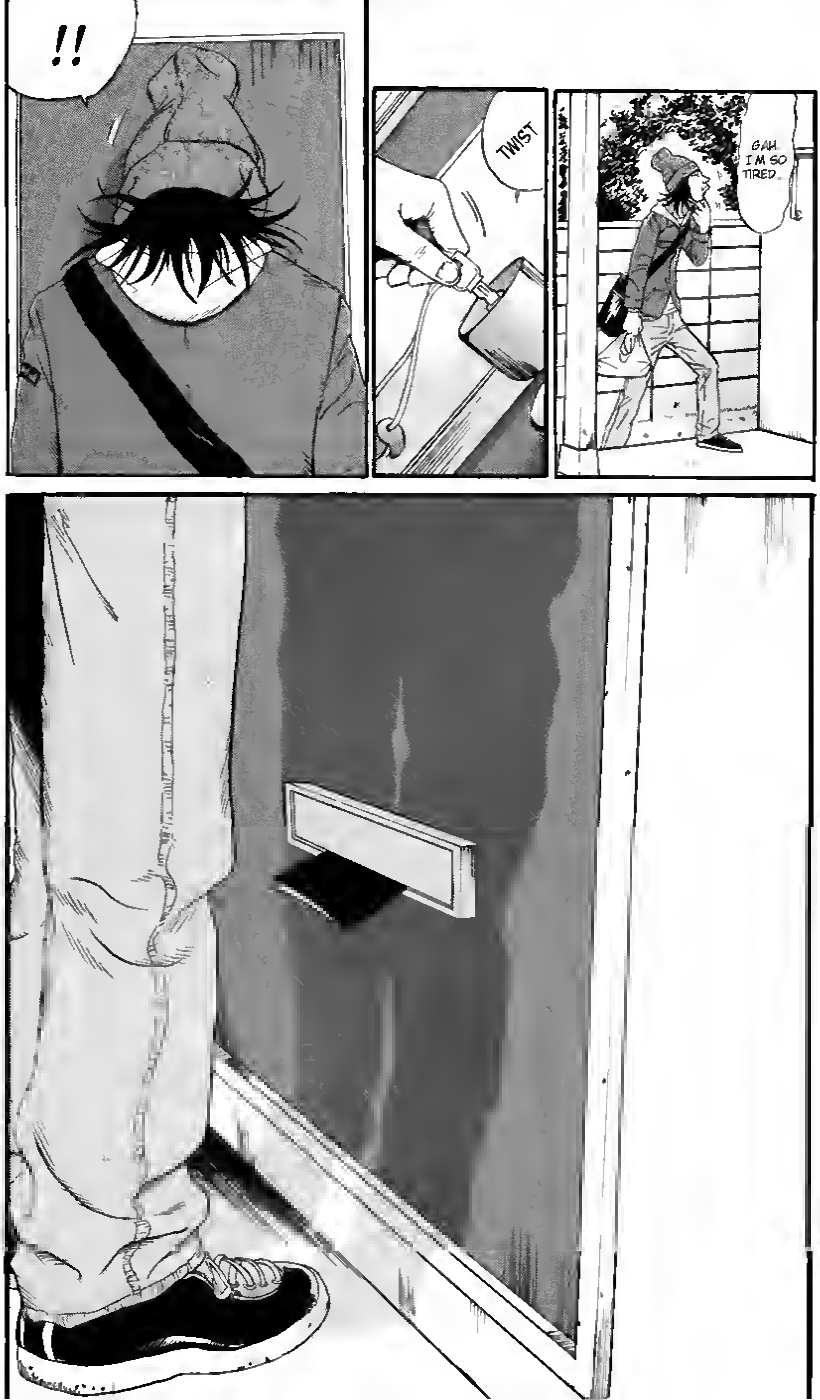
Could the letter have come from him?
Hey! Hold on a second!!

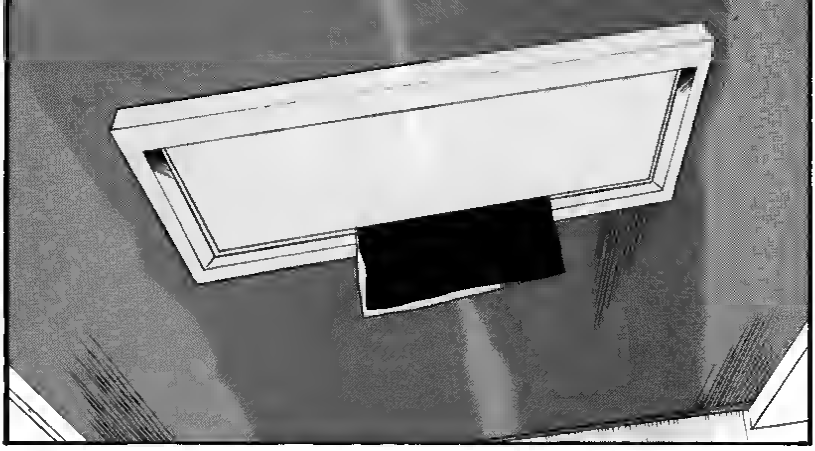

...Oh man, oh man... He's still looking this way... This is the pits...
...That guy means trouble...

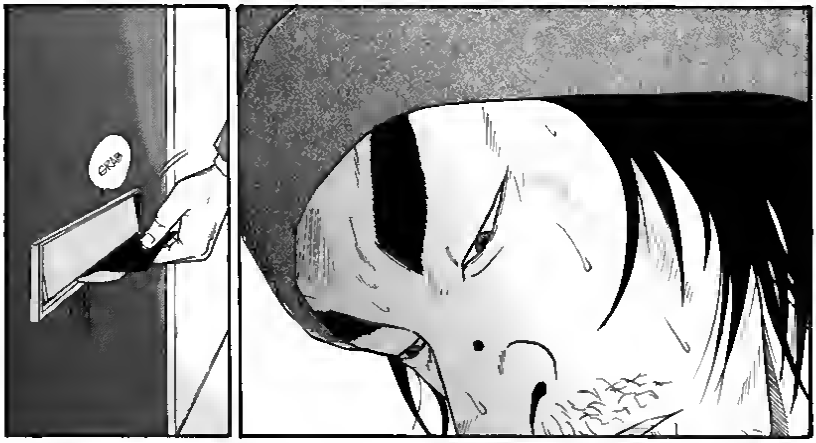
ダン ダン ダン ダン
CRUNK
SHII-IIT!! WHAT THE HELL IS WITH THAT GUY!!?
WHAT THE HELL DOES HE WANT!!?
WHOA!
HOW DO YOU LIKE MY SPIN KICK!?
YOU BASTARD, I'LL KICK YOUR ASS!!
OW!

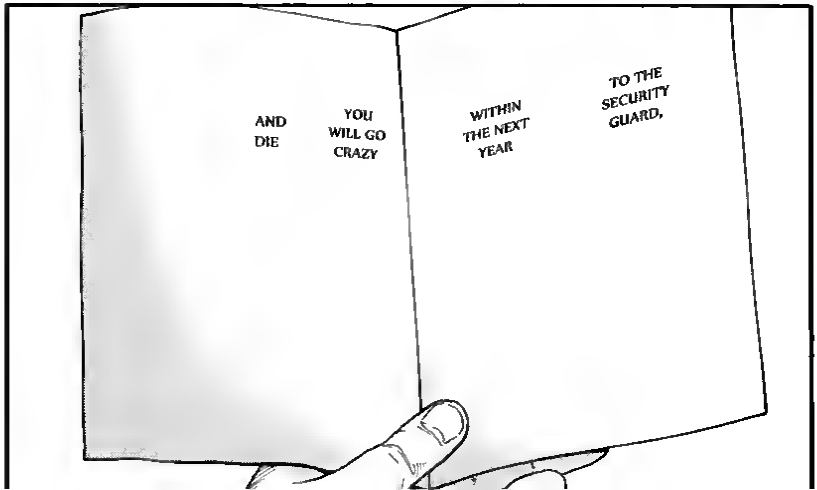
...Urghh, I hate this... I hate this so much...
Crawl Crawl
...What should I do... if that person's still there tomorrow and the day after that...

BEEP
PUSH
YAWN
CLICK


!!
TWIST
GAH. I'M SO TIRED...



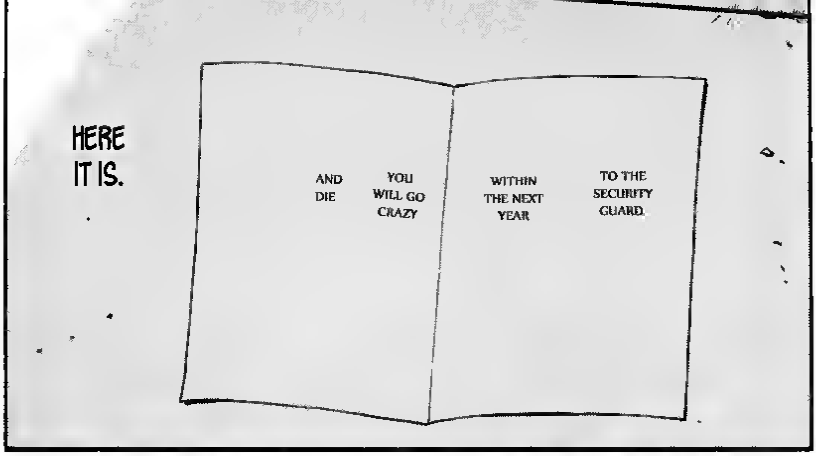

CRUSH

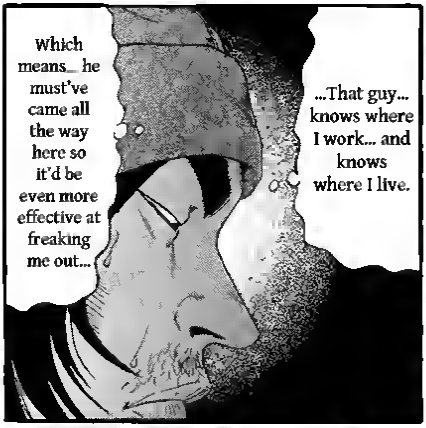

TO THE SECURITY GUARD,
WITHIN THE NEXT YEAR
YOU WILL GO CRAZY
AND DIE

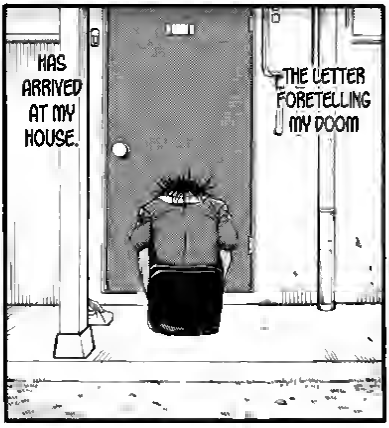
THE SECOND TIME NOW...
THIS IS...

Why!? Why is this happening!?
And they left it in front of my room...

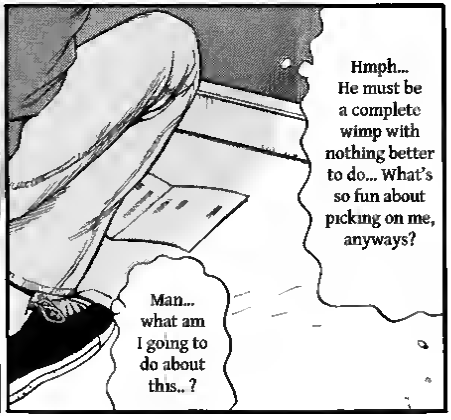
Chapter 3:
Resigned and Taking it as Lesson


HERE IT IS.
AND DIE
YOU WILL GO CRAZY
WITHIN THE NEXT YEAR
TO THE SECURITY GUARD.


Which means... he must've came all the way here so it'd be even more effective at freaking me out...
...That guy... knows where I work... and knows where I live.


HAS ARRIVED AT MY HOUSE.
THE LETTER FORETELLING MY DOOM

.....


Hmph... He must be a complete wimp with nothing better to do... What's so fun about picking on me, anyways?
Man... what am I going to do about this.. ?

I'M COM-PLETELY SHAKIN' IN MY BOOTS!!!
AGHHH, IT'S TOTALLY WORKING!! IT'S SUPER EFFECTIVE!!!

ALL OF THIS HAS GOTTA BE HIS DOING!!
SHIIIIT! IT'S HIM!!

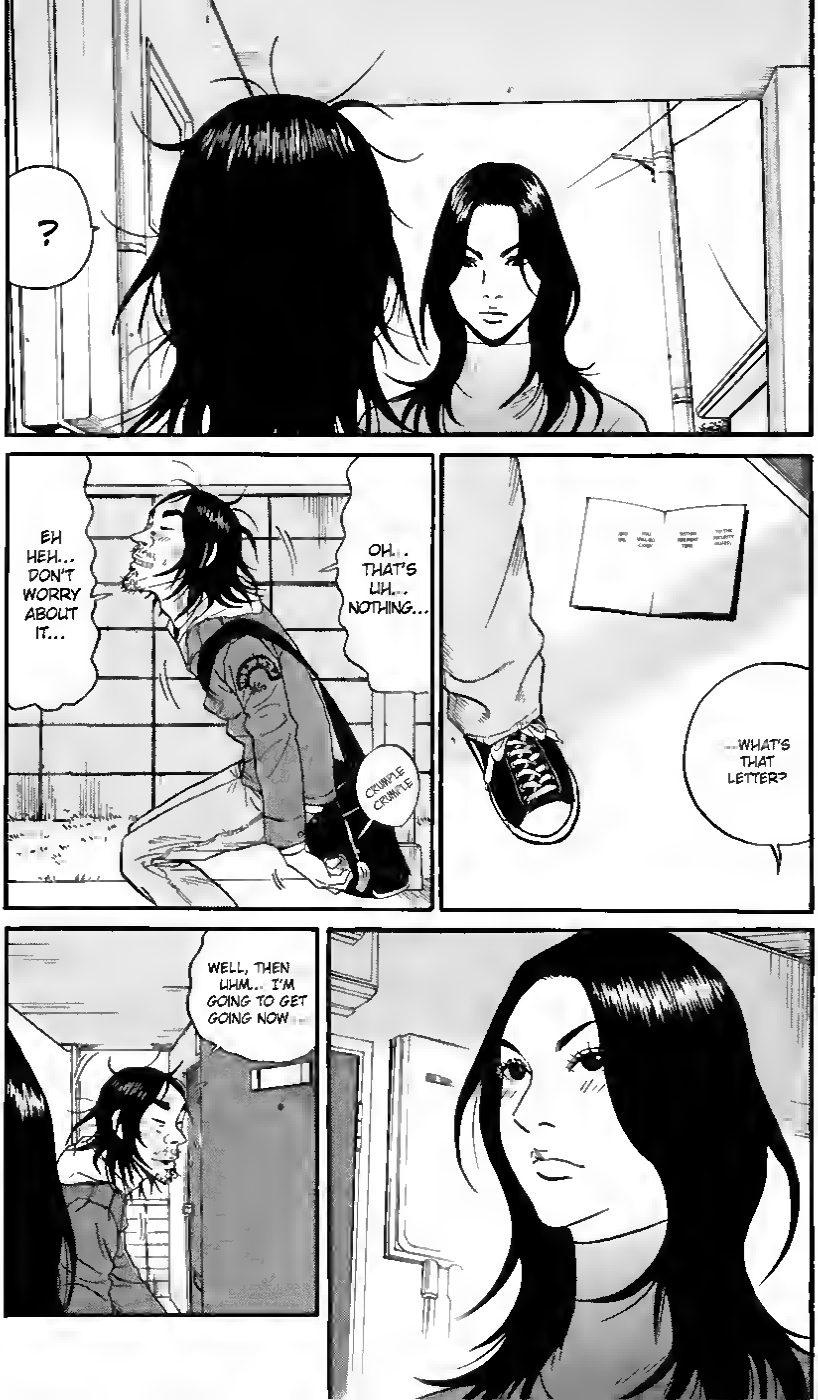
FINE, IF YOU WANNA PLAY HARDBALL, THEN I'M BRINGING OUT THE BIG GUNS!
I CAN'T TAKE THIS ANYMORE!! I'M NOT PUTTING UP WITH THIS!!

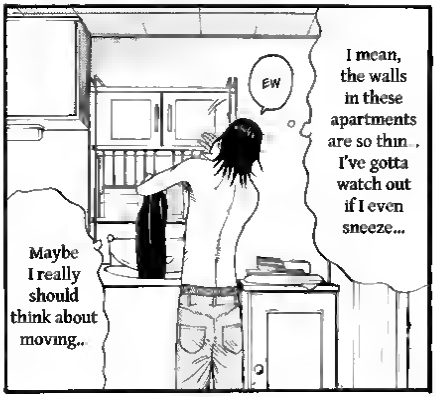
And then, while laughing mischievously to himself, he freakin' left this letter here.
He must've secretly tailed me one day and found out where I live!

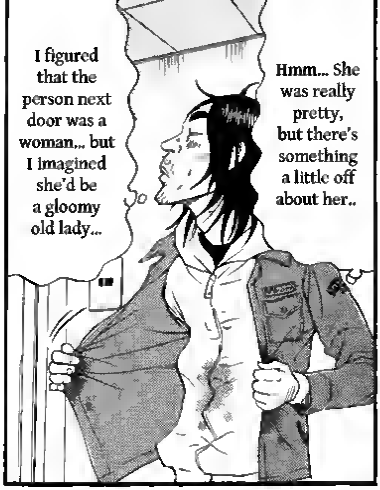
...possibly moving.. to deal with this..
... I should consider...
PANT
PANT
カカカ
CLICK
HNGH!!?
NGH-GH-GH-GH!!
WHA-AA!!?

PBBT
PBBT
...I'M SORRY... ARE YOU OKAY?
GKK
グァ
OH NO...

HUH?
SHE PEED...
...Oh... Yeah she did
I thought I felt something warm...
...I'M HANEDA, I LIVE OVER IN 103...
OH... I'M TOMIOKA, I LIVE NEXT DOOR. NICE TO MEET YOU
...TOMIOKA-SAN... SOMEONE I KNOW ASKED ME TO TAKE CARE OF THIS DOG FOR A FEW DAYS...
I KNOW IT'S AGAINST THE RULES... BUT COULD YOU KEEP IT A SECRET FROM THE LANDLORD?
YEAH, SURE, THAT'S FINE..


?
EH HEH... DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT...
OH.. THAT'S UH... NOTHING...
CRUMPLE CRUMPLE
...WHAT'S THAT LETTER?
WELL, THEN UHM... I'M GOING TO GET GOING NOW...


EW
I mean, the walls in these apartments are so thin... I've gotta watch out if I even sneeze...
Maybe I really should think about moving..

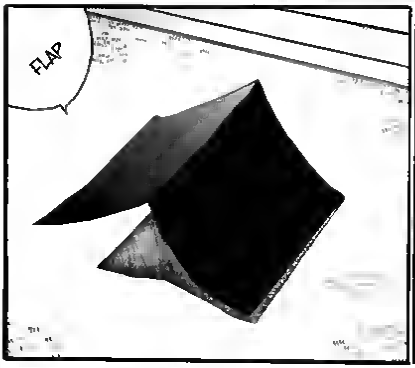

I figured that the person next door was a woman... but I imagined she'd be a gloomy old lady...
Hmm... She was really pretty, but there's something a little off about her..

Fs

SQUEAK
SQUEAK
.....
...It'd be different if I were famous or like flashy looking.. but I'm just a dirty old dude...
. Though I guess there's no real point to that They'll just feed me that bne about how there's no real threat to my safety and turn me away...
Okay... If that letter comes one more time.. just one more time...
then I'm gomg to go to the police...

Mean jerks usually don't deal well with being on the defense!
I'll show you... You can't just mess with me! I'll get you back!
Just when I was about to take the first steps towards a new life? It's making everything more difficult ..
Shit . Why do I have to deal with something like this ..
Okay, first I've got to look into that guy by the window. He's the most suspicious one— I'm gonna have to use some of my days off.
It'll be my turn to tail him.
TAP TAP
TAP TAP

TAP
TAP

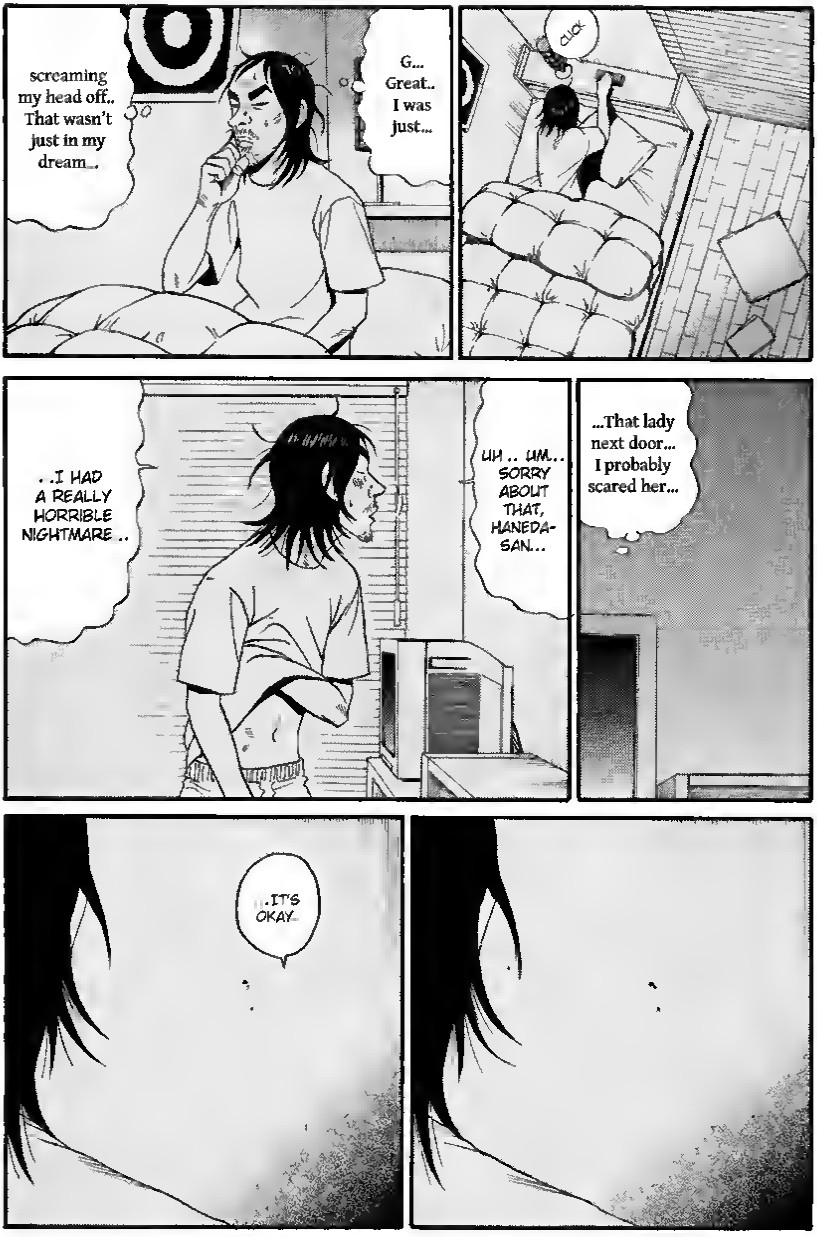

FLAP

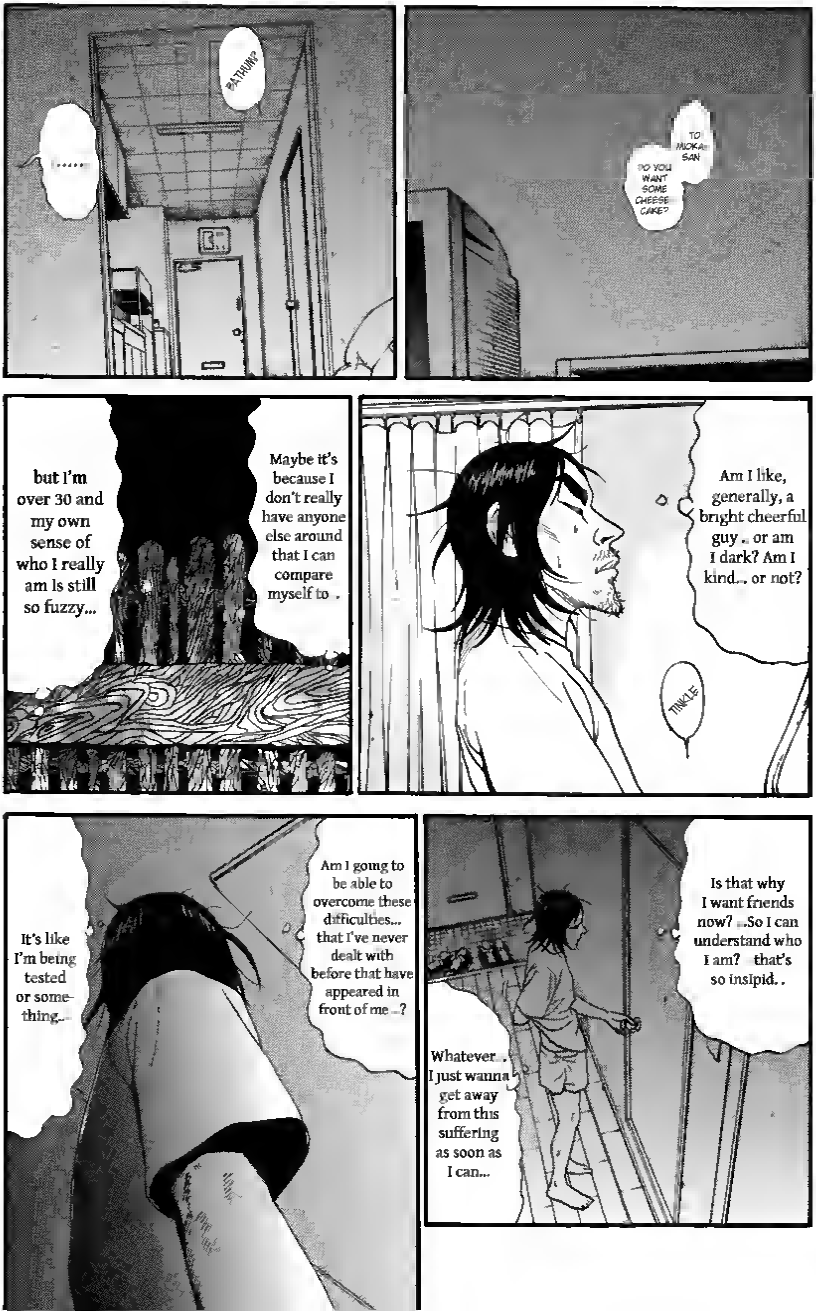
CRUNCH
CRUNCH

NEED THIS SORTA CRAP, MAN...
...I DON'T.
PUSH
FLAP

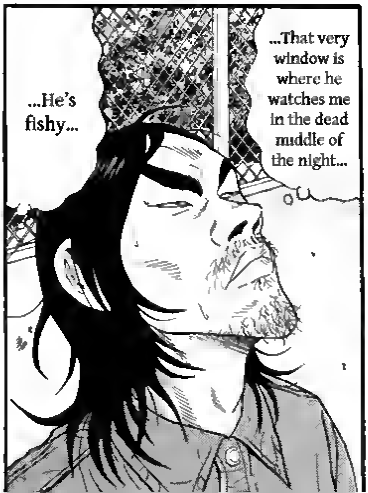
HOLD ON!!
WHOA! HEY!!
AUGH!!
DON'T DO IT!!
HEY! STOP THAT!!

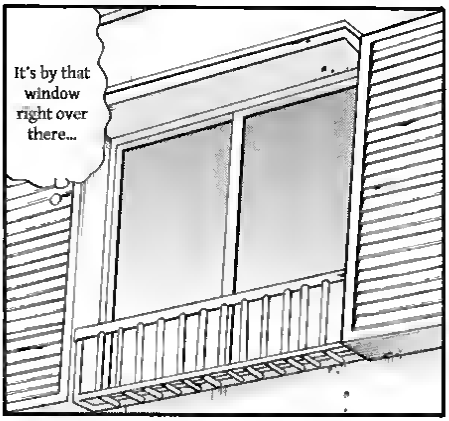
A-
GAH-
HHH-
HHH-
HHH!
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
9:01
GAGAH
GA
GA?
BEEP
BEEP


screaming my head off.. That wasn't just in my dream...
G... Great.. I was just...
click
..I HAD A REALLY HORRIBLE NIGHTMARE ..
UH .. UM... SORRY ABOUT THAT, HANEDA-SAN...
...That lady next door... I probably scared her...
..IT'S OKAY..


BATHING?
.....
TO MOKA-SAN
DO YOU WANT SOME CHEESE CAKE?
but I'm over 30 and my own sense of who I really am is still so fuzzy...
Maybe it's because I don't really have anyone else around that I can compare myself to .
Am I like, generally, a bright cheerful guy .. or am I dark? Am I kind... or not?
TINKLE
It's like I'm being tested or something...
Am I going to be able to overcome these difficulties... that I've never dealt with before that have appeared in front of me ...?
Is that why I want friends now? ...So I can understand who I am? that's so insipid. .
Whatever... I just wanna get away from this suffering as soon as I can...

CHAPTER 4: EYEWITNESS


...He's fishy...
...That very window is where he watches me in the dead middle of the night...


It's by that window right over there...

Maybe he's been watching me for a real long time...
And I just noticed recently...
So then, he got bored of just watching, and one day he thought. .
...MAYBE I SHOULD... MESS WITH HIM A LITTLE BIT.
BUT THAT'S ALL GOING TO END TODAY!!!
Since he's got all the time in the world, he sent one of the letters cursing me to the store, and another to my home...
And then he watched me as I was scared out of my wits, probably while drinking and grinning to himself. .
You want some excitement in your life!? Then I'll make your heart race faster than you could ever imagine!
I came here to tell that rotten scumbag, "Hey, you! You're a rotten scumbag!"
What a crying shame! Sorry, but I don't have the kind of times to play games with him!
I'll put an end to it today!! I'll lay it all out straight, to his face!!

Okay.. This is the place!
PHOOO
And there's no mail or anything either..
No nameplate on it..
TREMBLE
TREMBLE
HERE WE GO!! ATTACK ON SCUMBAG!!
TREMBLE
TREMBLE
TREMBLE

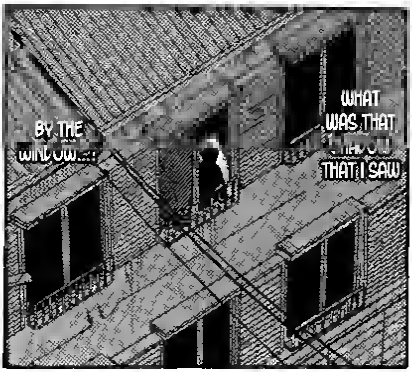
What should I do if he was like third or fourth in the country all throughout his school years?
A muscle-bound body with a sick mind? No thank you! I can't handle that!!
WHAT AM I GONNA DO IF HE'S A FAMOUS KARATE FIGHTER OR SOMETHING!!?
All right!! Here goes!!!
He'll definitely be like just how I imagine him, a gangly weedy manchild.
No! The likelihood of that is low! Incredibly low!! I don't need to worry about that!
BUT EVEN IF HE'S WEAK AND GANGLY, WHAT IF HE'S GOT A HUGE KNIFE!? THEN WHAT AM I GONNA DO!!?
TREMBLE
TREMBLE
TREMBLE

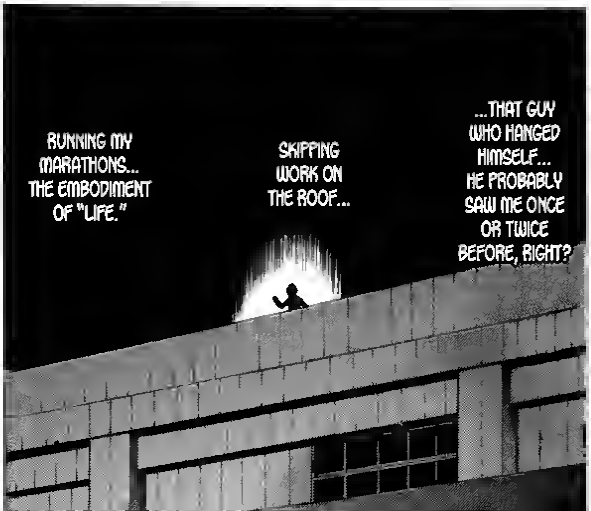
Huh!?
SWING
What if I catch him way too much by surprise and he pulls something sharp out on me!?
I mean, everyone's cranky in the mornings, right? Maybe this is a little too much excitement!?
COULD I ASK YOU A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PERSON THAT LIVES NEXT TO YOU?
OHHHH! EXCUSEEEE MEEEE!
HM?
THERE HASN'T BEEN ANYONE LIVING THERE FOR THE PAST 3 YEARS
NAH, THERE'S NO ONE THERE... I'VE BEEN LIVING HERE FOR 5 YEARS, AND...
WHAT!? THERE'S GOTTA BE SOMEONE THERE!!
HUH? SURE, BUT NOBODY EVEN LIVES THERE...

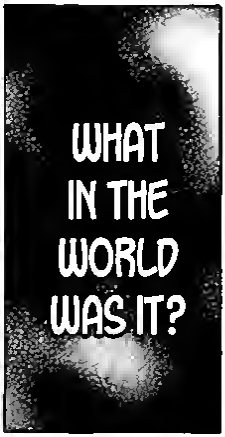
HE HUNG HIMSELF... INSIDE THAT ROOM...
...UH, WELL .. UP TILL 3 YEARS AGO, THE SON OF THE LANDLORD OF THESE APARTMENTS LIVED THERE, BUT...
SOME-BODY'S DEFI-NITELY THERE!!
WHAAAAT!? NO WAYYYY!!
OH... YEAH, HAVE A NICE DAY
IS THAT ALL? ...I'VE REALLY GOT TO GET GOING.
ANYWAYS, EVER SINCE THEN, NOBODY'S BEEN LIVING THERE. I DON'T THINK THEY'RE EVEN TAKING APPLICATIONS.
HE SEEMED LIKE A GUY WHO TOOK THINGS REALLY SERIOUSLY, AND I GUESS IT JUST GOT TOO MUCH FOR HIM.
UH..
WELL..
HEY, ARE YOU LIKE, HERE DOING A SURVEY OR SOMETHING?

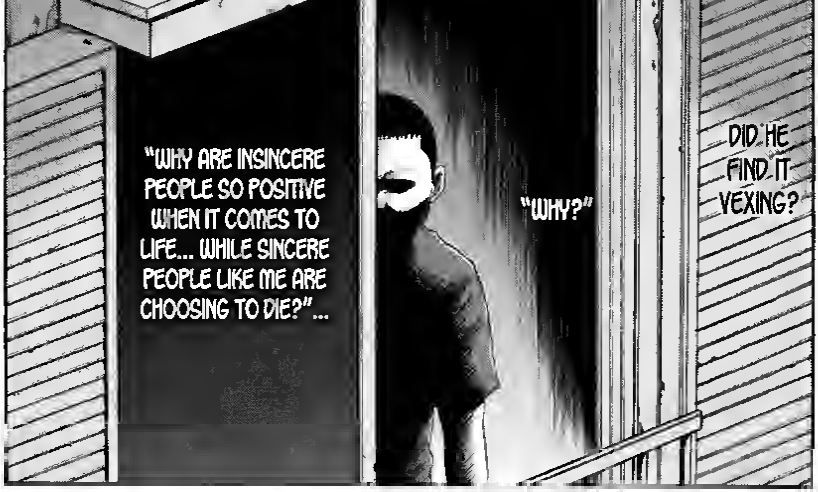
...THEN...
.....

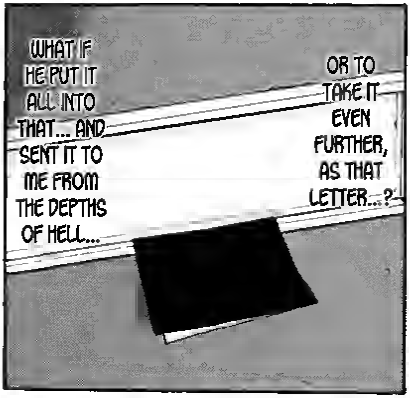
SO...
I'M ABSOLUTELY CE..TAIN THAT IT WAS... "HUMAN"...

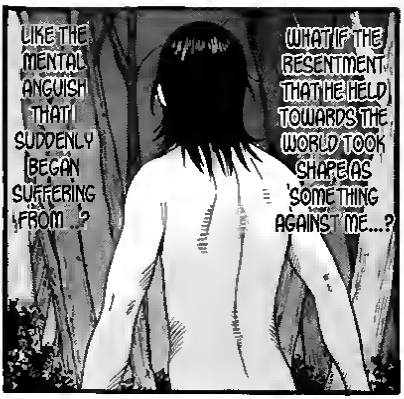

BY THE WINDOW...!
WHAT WAS THAT THAT I SAW


RUNNING MY MARATHONS... THE EMBODIMENT OF "LIFE."
SKIPPING WORK ON THE ROOF...
...THAT GUY WHO HANGED HIMSELF... HE PROBABLY SAW ME ONCE OR TWICE BEFORE, RIGHT?


WHAT IN THE WORLD WAS IT?


"WHY ARE INSINCERE PEOPLE SO POSITIVE WHEN IT COMES TO LIFE... WHILE SINCERE PEOPLE LIKE ME ARE CHOOSING TO DIE?"...
"WHY?"
DID HE FIND IT VEXING?


WHAT IF HE PUT IT ALL INTO THAT... AND SENT IT TO ME FROM THE DEPTHS OF HELL...
OR TO TAKE IT EVEN FURTHER, AS THAT LETTER...?


LIKE THE MENTAL ANGUISH THAT I SUDDENLY BEGAN SUFFERING FROM...?
WHAT IF THE RESENTMENT THAT HE HELD TOWARDS THE WORLD TOOK SHAPE AS SOMETHING AGAINST ME...?

"YOU'RE GONNA DIE RIGHT HERE WITH ME."
"YOU IDIOT."
"YOU WANT FRIENDS?"

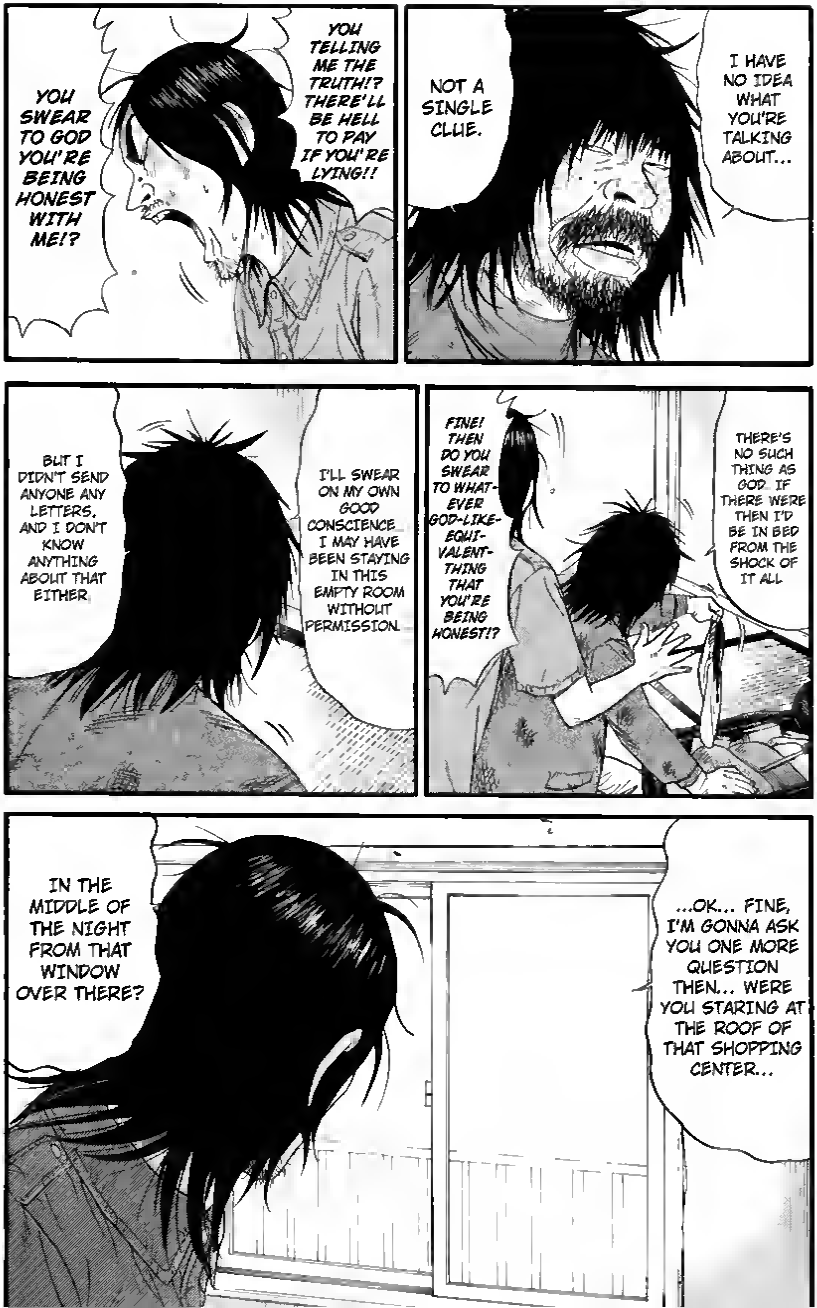
NGH-
HHH...
GUH...
PEE MY PANTS...
I'M GONNA...
OH... CRAP... I THINK I'M GONNA CRY...

U-
GYAH-
HHHH
TWIST
GLANCE

SHUT

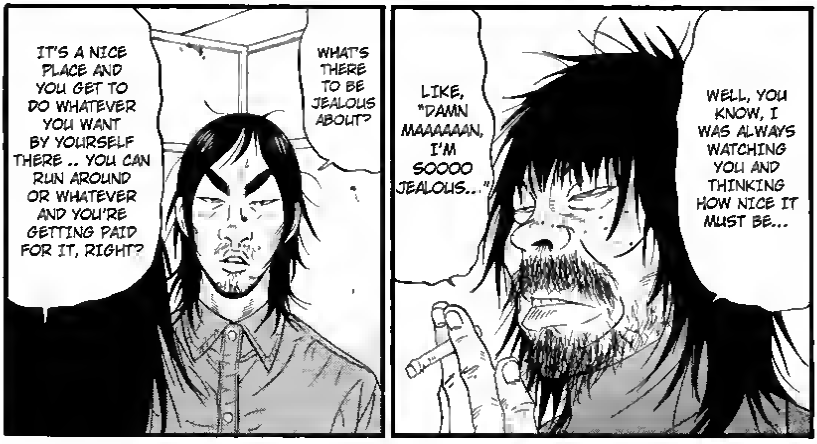
CLICK
I'LL GET OUT OF HERE RIGHT AWAY
AHH, I'M SORRY...
PAT

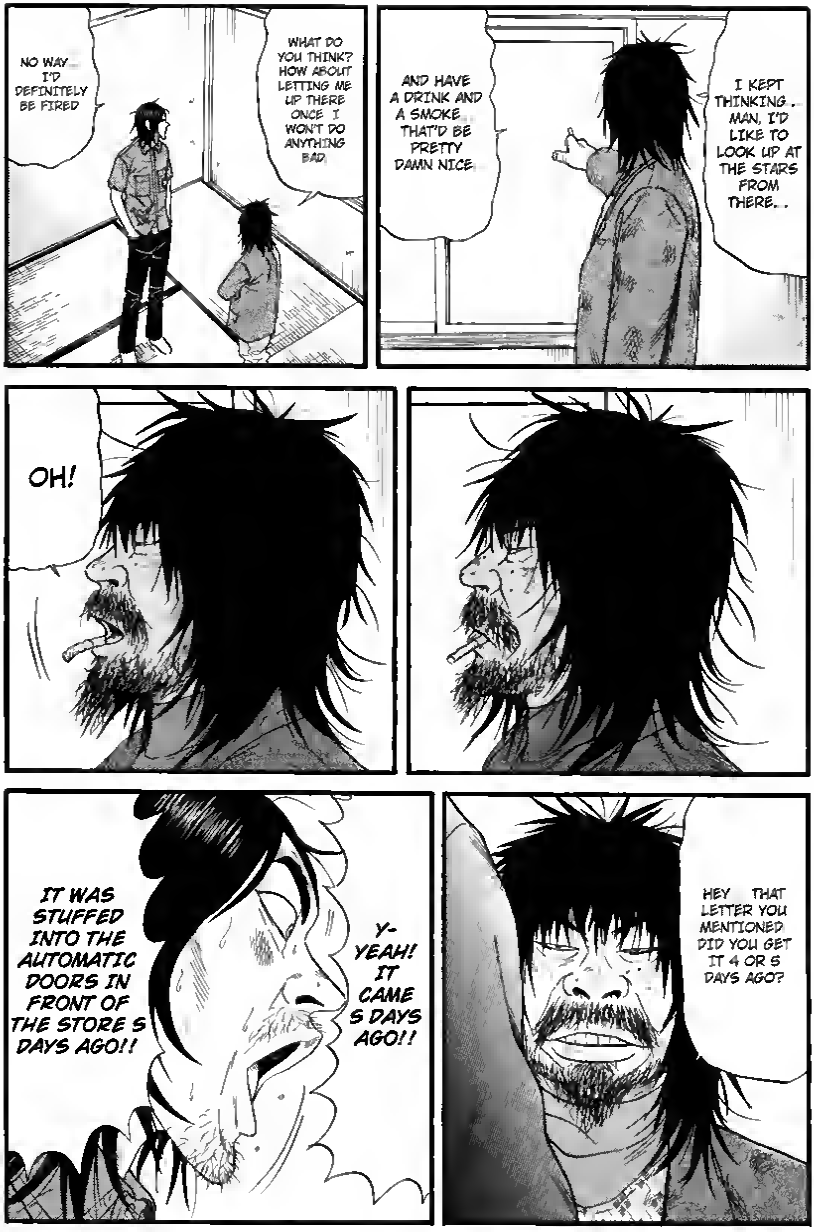
YES, I'M SORRY, I'LL LEAVE RIGHT AWAY...
I'VE GOT SOMETHING THAT I WANT TO ASK YOU!
HEY, YOU!! STOP THAT!
DID YOU LEAVE A STRANGE LETTER IN FRONT OF THAT SHOPPING CENTER THERE!!?
THAT'S NOT IT! THE LETTER! WHAT ABOUT THE LETTER!?
IT DOESN'T MATTER! JUST TELL ME IF YOU SENT A LETTER OR NOT! ANSWER ME!!
WHAT LETTER?
HUH, A LETTER?


I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT...
NOT A SINGLE CLUE.
YOU TELLING ME THE TRUTH!? THERE'LL BE HELL TO PAY IF YOU'RE LYING!!
YOU SWEAR TO GOD YOU'RE BEING HONEST WITH ME!?
THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS GOD. IF THERE WERE THEN I'D BE IN BED FROM THE SHOCK OF IT ALL
FINE! THEN DO YOU SWEAR TO WHATEVER GOD-LIKE-EQUIVALENT-THING THAT YOU'RE BEING HONEST!?
I'LL SWEAR ON MY OWN GOOD CONSCIENCE I MAY HAVE BEEN STAYING IN THIS EMPTY ROOM WITHOUT PERMISSION.
BUT I DIDN'T SEND ANYONE ANY LETTERS, AND I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THAT EITHER.
...OK... FINE, I'M GONNA ASK YOU ONE MORE QUESTION THEN... WERE YOU STARING AT THE ROOF OF THAT SHOPPING CENTER...
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT FROM THAT WINDOW OVER THERE?

HUH? ARE YOU TELLING ME... THAT YOU'RE THE SECURITY GUARD THAT WORKS THERE?
YOU'RE THE ONE THAT'S ALWAYS SLACKING OFF ON THE ROOF OVER THERE?

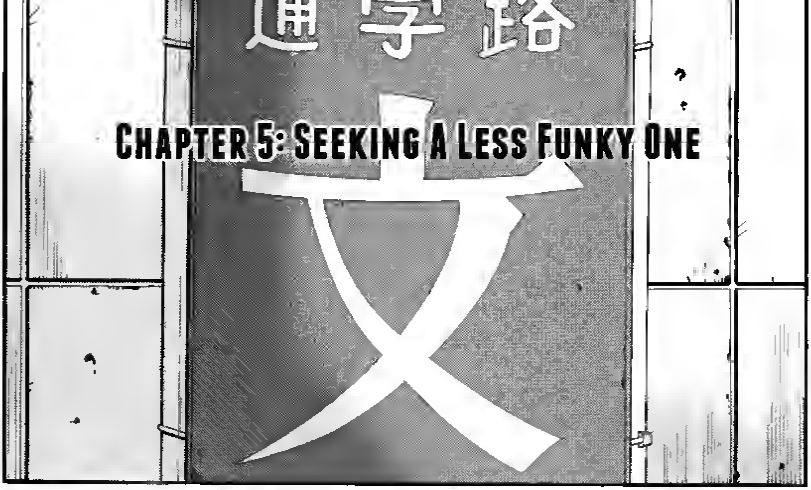
OHHH, I GET IT ALL NOW, SO THAT WAS YOU! WHOA, BRO, THIS IS SORTA AWESOME!
DON'T YOU FEEL LIKE, "WOW, SO WE FINALLY MEET, HUH?"
NO, I DON'T! IT'S NOT LIKE THAT AT ALL!!


WELL, YOU KNOW, I WAS ALWAYS WATCHING YOU AND THINKING HOW NICE IT MUST BE...
LIKE, "DAMN MAAAAAAN, I'M SOOOO JEALOUS..."
WHAT'S THERE TO BE JEALOUS ABOUT?
IT'S A NICE PLACE AND YOU GET TO DO WHATEVER YOU WANT BY YOURSELF THERE .. YOU CAN RUN AROUND OR WHATEVER AND YOU'RE GETTING PAID FOR IT, RIGHT?

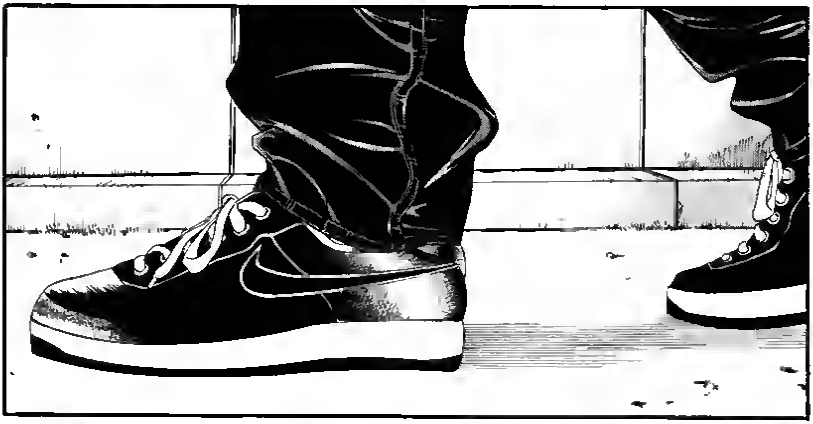

NO WAY... I'D DEFINITELY BE FIRED
WHAT DO YOU THINK? HOW ABOUT LETTING ME UP THERE ONCE I WON'T DO ANYTHING BAD.
I KEPT THINKING... MAN, I'D LIKE TO LOOK UP AT THE STARS FROM THERE...
AND HAVE A DRINK AND A SMOKE... THAT'D BE PRETTY DAMN NICE.
OH!
HEY... THAT LETTER YOU MENTIONED DID YOU GET IT 4 OR 5 DAYS AGO?
Y-YEAH! IT CAME 5 DAYS AGO!!
IT WAS STUFFED INTO THE AUTOMATIC DOORS IN FRONT OF THE STORE 5 DAYS AGO!!

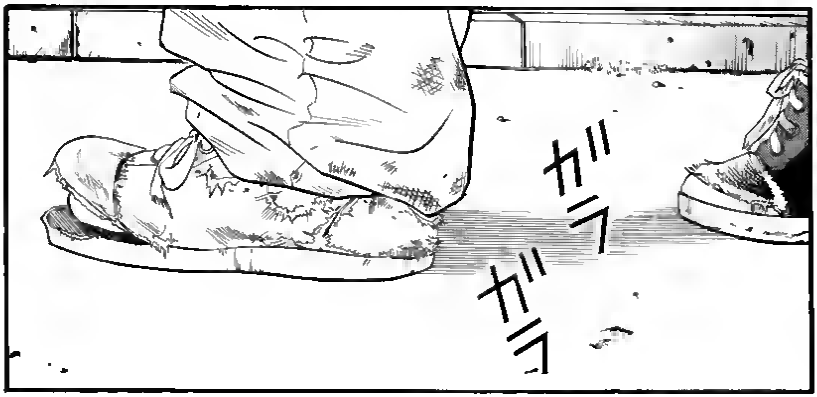
BRO, LET'S SHAKE ON IT.
WHAT!? SHAKE ON IT FOR WHAT!?
I SAW IT ALL... I SAW THAT WEIRD LOOKING GUY...
LURKING AROUND IN FRONT OF THE ENTRANCE TO THE SHOP 5 DAYS AGO...
AT FIRST I THOUGHT MAYBE YOU GUYS ADDED ANOTHER SECURITY GUARD OR SOMETHING... BUT THEN I FIGURED IT OUT RIGHT AWAY THAT THIS GUY WAS SUSPICIOUS...
I WAS SO WORRIED, I EVEN THOUGHT ABOUT FINDING A WAY TO TELL YOU ABOUT IT... YOU WERE UP THERE RUNNING AROUND AND THIS GUY COULD'VE BEEN A BURGLAR TRYING TO BUST HIS WAY IN THERE.

Y-YOU SAW THE GUY!? YOU SAW THE PERSON WHO DID IT!? WHAT WAS THIS GUY LIKE!? WAS IT A MAN OR A WOMAN!?
WAS IT SOME-ONE BIG OR SMALL!?
BRO, YOU LIVING BY YOURSELF?
WHAT'S THAT GOT TO DO WITH IT!? TELL ME WHICH WAY THAT GUY HEADED INSTEAD!!
IF YOU LET ME STAY IN YOUR HOUSE FOR, LIKE... A COUPLE OF DAYS, THEN...
PHOOO
I GUESS I COULD TELL YOU.
AS IT IS, IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE IN A BIT OF A JAM, SO...
WHAT DO YOU THINK? WE CAN HELP EACH OTHER OUT.



Chapter 5: Seeking A Less Funky One





HEY, BRO.
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ガラ
YO, BRO!
YOU'RE WALKING TOO FAST.
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ガラ
I'M AN IMPORTANT SOURCE OF INFORMATION FOR YOU, YOU KNOW!?
YOU PUNK! YOU'RE IGNORING ME... YOU SURE YOU SHOULD BE DOING THAT!?
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LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT DISCRIMINATION, WHAT COMES AROUND GOES AROUND, YOU HEAR?
OH, I SEE. YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT WHAT OTHER PEOPLE WILL THINK OF YOU?
KEEP YOUR DISTANCE FROM ME!
I'M WALKING THIS FAST ON PURPOSE!
WHAT DOES A PERSON EVEN DO THAT GETS THEM SMELLING SO DAMN RANK!? AND HOW CAN IT NOT SEEM TO BOTHER THE PERSON HIMSELF!?
THAT'S NOT IT! LOOK, YOU SMELL, OKAY!? YOU SMELL REALLY BAD!!
I'M A FAN OF SUITS. I LIKE ONES THAT HAVE THAT DEEP ENDLESS BLACK TO THEM...
THAT'S RIGHT! IF THE LANDLORD SEES YOU LIKE THIS I'LL BE KICKED OUT IMMEDIATELY!
HUH? WHAT? THEN ARE YOU BUYING ME SOME CLOTHES OR SOMETHING?
THERE'S NO WAY I'M LETTING YOU IN THE HOUSE AS IS! I'M MAKING SURE YOU TAKE CARE OF YOUR APPEARANCE RIGHT NOW!
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ガラ

PHEW.
THANKS FOR WAAAAI-TING.
AHHHH, THAT FELT GRRREAT.

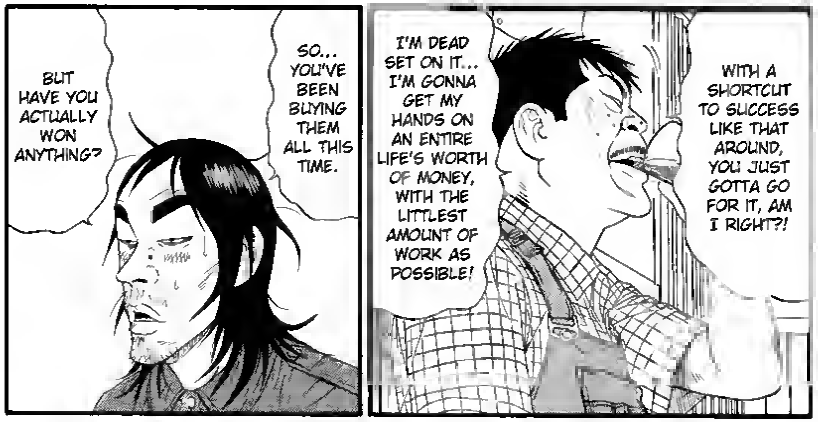
BUT, HONESTLY, WHAT'S WITH THESE CLOTHES? BRO, YOU DON'T GOT TOO MUCH FASHION SENSE, DO YOU?
THIS OLD MAN INSIDE THERE ASKED ME IF I WAS OLD MACDONALD OR SOMETHING
DON'T COMPLAIN I WENT OUT OF MY WAY TO BUY THOSE FOR YOU
BUT THE PRICE WRITTEN ON THE TAG FOR THESE OVERALLS SAID IT WAS ONLY 700 YEN THE CLOTHES I WAS WEARING WAS MORE EXPENSIVE THAN THAT
OKAY, GO FIX YOUR HAIR NEXT! I'LL GIVE YOU SOME MONEY SO GET A SHAVE AND A HAIRCUT AT THE BARBER SHOP OVER THERE!
I WANT BARBECUE.
WHAT?
FOR THE LAST 5 YEARS, JUST SEEIN' A SIGN FOR A BARBECUE PLACE WOULD GET MY STOMACH GROWLING SO LOUD...
I WANT SOME BARBECUE.
IF YOU'RE GONNA GIVE ME MONEY TO CUT MY HAIR, THEN GET ME SOME BARBECUE.
AND GET ME A NICE COLD BEER TOO

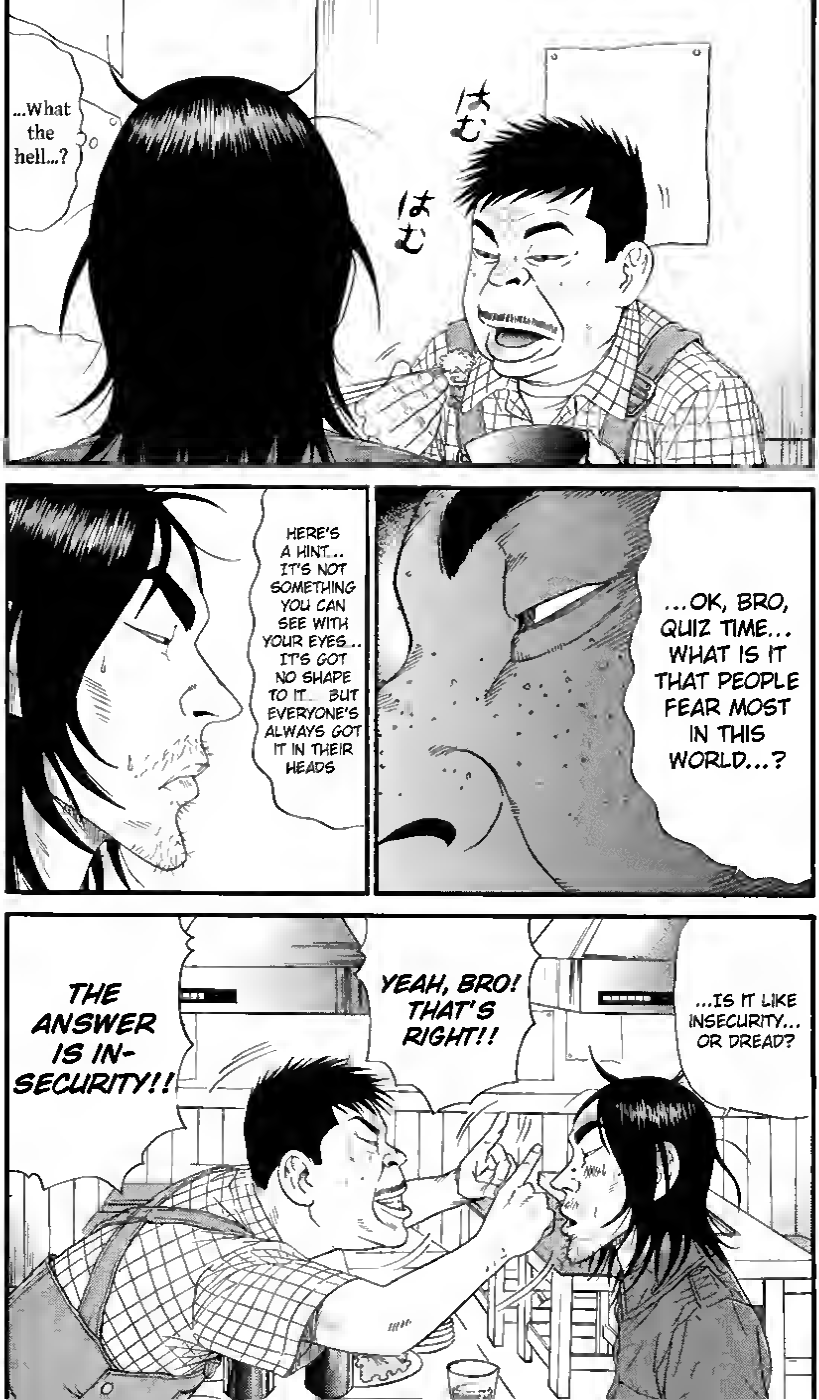
HMM... I WONDER WHAT ELSE WE SHOULD GET?
焼肉大国
YEAH, SURE... YOU CAN GET ANOTHER BEER TOO.
BRO, CAN I ORDER ANOTHER SERVING OF SKIRT STEAK? SOME STEAK AND KIMCHI?
YEAH, IT'S FINE... EAT AND DRINK AS MUCH AS YOU WANT!
AND YOU GAVE ME MONEY TO GET MY HAIR CUT TOOOOO. ARE YOU SURE THIS IS OKAY?
MAAAAAAAN, I FEEL SORTA BAD ABOUT ALL THIS... I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D REALLY BUY ME FOOD TO EAT.

...Just you watch, you walking turd... Once you're drunk enough I'm gonna get that information out of you and split!
I'm not letting you inside my home!
OH MAN, I'M A REAL SUCKER FOR NICE GUYS LIKE YOU.
WHOA! BRO, YOU'RE SO SUPER NICE! THERE AREN'T MANY PEOPLE LIKE YOU AROUND!
LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT MY DREAM!
BRO, LISTEN TO THIS! LISTEN TO MY DREAM, MAN!
I'M GONNA TURN IT ALL AROUND IN ONE SHOT! JUST YOU WATCH!
I KNOW I MIGHT... UH, LOOK LIKE THIS RIGHT NOW, BUT...
YEAH, OF COURSE I DO! MY DREAM IS PRETTY MUCH ALL I LIVE FOR! I'M A TOOOOTAL ROMANTIC AT HEART!
HUH? ...YOU'VE GOT A DREAM?

I'M TALKING ABOUT THE LOTTERY, BRO! EVERY TIME I'VE HAD ANY HARD EARNED CASH, I'VE BEEN INVESTING IT INTO THE LOTTERY. BEEN AT IT SINCE I WAS 18...
I'VE KEPT AT IT ALL THESE YEARS... THE LOTTERY, MAN!

YOU KNOW HOW MUCH MONEY AN AVERAGE WORKER AT A COMPANY CAN MAKE IN THEIR ENTIRE LIFETIME? ONLY ABOUT 2 HUNDRED MILLION YEN. YOU BELIEVE IT? 2 HUNDRED MIL!
YOU KNOW HOW MUCH THE FIRST AND SECONDARY PRIZES FOR THE LOTTERY IS THESE DAYS?
UH... 3 HUNDRED MILLION YEN?
THAT'S RIGHT! THAT'S A LOT, YEAH!? YOU CAN WIN MORE THAN SOMEONE COULD MAKE IN THEIR ENTIRE LIFE IN ONE SHOT!!


WITH A SHORTCUT TO SUCCESS LIKE THAT AROUND, YOU JUST GOTTA GO FOR IT, AM I RIGHT?!
I'M DEAD SET ON IT... I'M GONNA GET MY HANDS ON AN ENTIRE LIFE'S WORTH OF MONEY, WITH THE LITTLEST AMOUNT OF WORK AS POSSIBLE!
SO... YOU'VE BEEN BUYING THEM ALL THIS TIME.
BUT HAVE YOU ACTUALLY WON ANYTHING?


...What the hell...?
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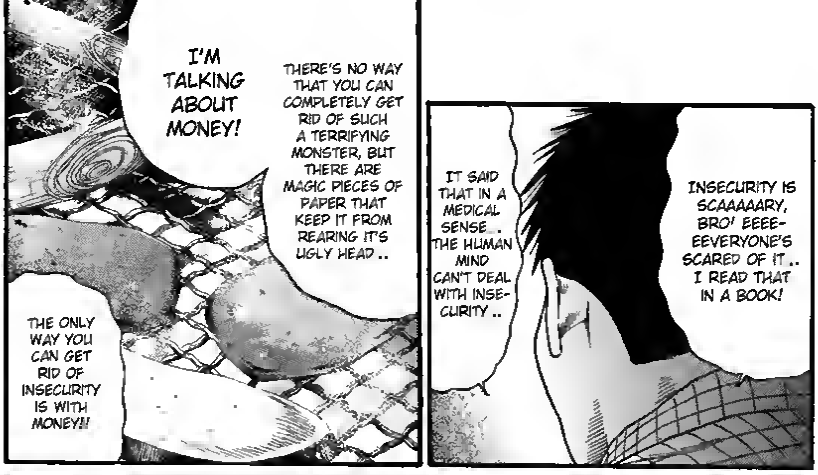
はむ
HERE'S A HINT... IT'S NOT SOMETHING YOU CAN SEE WITH YOUR EYES... IT'S GOT NO SHAPE TO IT... BUT EVERYONE'S ALWAYS GOT IT IN THEIR HEADS
...OK, BRO, QUIZ TIME... WHAT IS IT THAT PEOPLE FEAR MOST IN THIS WORLD...?
THE ANSWER IS IN-SECURITY!!
YEAH, BRO! THAT'S RIGHT!!
...IS IT LIKE INSECURITY... OR DREAD?


I'M TALKING ABOUT MONEY!
THERE'S NO WAY THAT YOU CAN COMPLETELY GET RID OF SUCH A TERRIFYING MONSTER, BUT THERE ARE MAGIC PIECES OF PAPER THAT KEEP IT FROM REARING IT'S UGLY HEAD..
THE ONLY WAY YOU CAN GET RID OF INSECURITY IS WITH MONEY!!
IT SAID THAT IN A MEDICAL SENSE.. THE HUMAN MIND CAN'T DEAL WITH INSECURITY..
INSECURITY IS SCAAAAARY, BRO! EEEE-EEVERYONE'S SCARED OF IT.. I READ THAT IN A BOOK!

THIS IS TOP SECRET BUT, THEY SAY THERE'S THIS CRAZY UNDERGROUND CASINO IN HONG KONG WHERE THE STAKES START AT A HUNDRED MILLION YEN...
I'M GONNA MAKE IT OUT THERE! I'M GONNA USE THE MONEY I WIN FROM THE LOTTERY AND TURN IT INTO HUNDREDS AND BILLIONS OF YEN! I'M GONNA SEND MY INSECURITY PACKIN'!

EXCUSE ME, SIR? I'M STILL WAITING ON AN EGG DROP SOUP HERE!
THEN I GUESS YOU BETTER DO SOME HONEST WORK SO YOU CAN BUY SOME LOTTERY TICKETS.
UH... MY DREAM IS...
HMM... MY DREAM, HUH?
WHAT? MY DREAM?
ALL RIGHT, IT'S YOUR TURN, BRO! LET'S HEAR WHAT YOUR DREAM IS!!
I GUESS IT'S TO MAKE A FRIEND...
ERHM, WELL, MY GOAL FOR THIS YEAR... IS, UH...
OH? THAT'S GOOD! WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S YOUR GOAL FOR THIS YEAR, BRO!?
UH, I GUESS I'VE NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT ANYTHING THAT BIG BEFORE... I MEAN, AS FAR AS THIS YEAR GOES, I'VE GOT A GOAL THOUGH...

A NEW FRIEND!
YOU'VE MADE ONE TODAY, RIGHT!?
WHAAAAT? THAT'S ALL!? THEN, I GUESS YOU'VE ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED YOUR GOAL, RIGHT!?
HUH..? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
I NEED TO GO TO THE TOILET..
HEY! WHY DON'T YOU SAY SOMETHING!? YOU NEEDA OPEN UP YOUR HEART NOW THAT THE TIME IS RIGHT!
Hmm...
—My dream, huh–?

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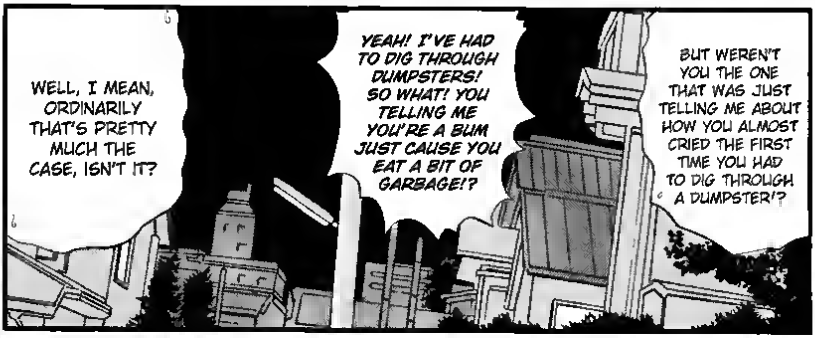
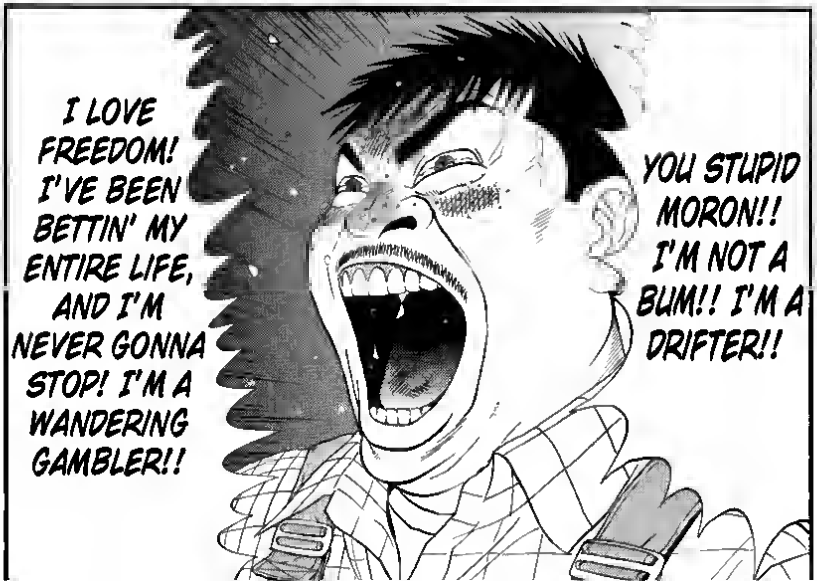
AND WHEN I WIN A BILLLLLION YEN,
フラフラ
AND I'M GONNA BUY AAAAALL THESE CARS!
I'M GONNA LIVE IN A HUUU-UUUGE HOUSE!!

I'M GONNA MARRY A HOT YOUNG GIRL WHO'LL BE COMPLETELY IN IT FOR THE MONEY,
AND I'LL HIRE A TOP CHEF, AND HAVE A GREAT DOCTOR.
I'M GONNA HAVE A GREAT LIFE WITH NOTHING AT ALL TO FEEL INSECURE ABOUT!!
LITTLE OLD ME!!
HEY, YOU KNOW... I DIDN'T REALLY WANT TO SAY ANYTHING, BUT... IS IT OKAY IF I ASK YOU ONE THING?
WHAT? YEAH, SURE GO AHEAD! ASK ME WHATEVER YOU WANT! JUST CONSIDER ME YOUR GUIDE IN LIFE!
IF YOU DON'T WIN THE LOTTERY... THEN WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO?
HEH HEH HEH... I'LL WIN! I'LL SHOW YOU!
I'VE GOT RIDICULOUSLY GOOD LUCK ON MY SIDE! MY DEAD GRANDMOTHER USED TO SAY SO ALL THE TIME!!
ALL RIGHT, LET'S JUST SAY FOR ARGUMENT'S SAKE THAT YOU WIN AFTER YOU'RE ALREADY PAST 80 BUT THAT'D MEAN THAT THE GREATER HALF OF YOUR LIFE WAS SPENT AS A COMPLETE BUM. .

BRO, YOU NEED TO WATCH THE LANGUAGE! I'M A REAL PEACE LOVIN' KINDA GUY, BUT YOU'RE ABOUT TO MAKE ME ANGRY!!
WHOA! HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!! I'M NO BUM!!


WELL, I MEAN, ORDINARILY THAT'S PRETTY MUCH THE CASE, ISN'T IT?
YEAH! I'VE HAD TO DIG THROUGH DUMPSTERS! SO WHAT! YOU TELLING ME YOU'RE A BUM JUST CAUSE YOU EAT A BIT OF GARBAGE!?
BUT WEREN'T YOU THE ONE THAT WAS JUST TELLING ME ABOUT HOW YOU ALMOST CRIED THE FIRST TIME YOU HAD TO DIG THROUGH A DUMPSTER!?


I LOVE FREEDOM! I'VE BEEN BETTIN' MY ENTIRE LIFE, AND I'M NEVER GONNA STOP! I'M A WANDERING GAMBLER!!
YOU STUPID MORON!! I'M NOT A BUM!! I'M A DRIFTER!!

ARE YOU SERIOUS!? YOU'VE BEEN GOING ON ABOUT MONEY THIS WHOLE TIME!!
IT'S ABOUT WHAT PEOPLE HAVE GOT ON THE INSIDE! THAT'S WHAT THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS!
HONESTLY, BEING ABLE TO SAY THAT SORTA THING MEANS THAT YOU'RE THE BUM! YOU'RE BROKE AS FAR AS HAVING A HEART IS CONCERNED, SO THAT MAKES YOU A BUM!!

HEY! COME ON!!
WHOA, MY EYYYESS ARE SPINNING!
WAS IT A MAN OR A WOMAN!? WHICH WAY DID THEY RUN!?
BESIDES!! ISN'T IT ABOUT TIME YOU TOLD ME ALREADY!? WHO SENT THAT LETTER!?

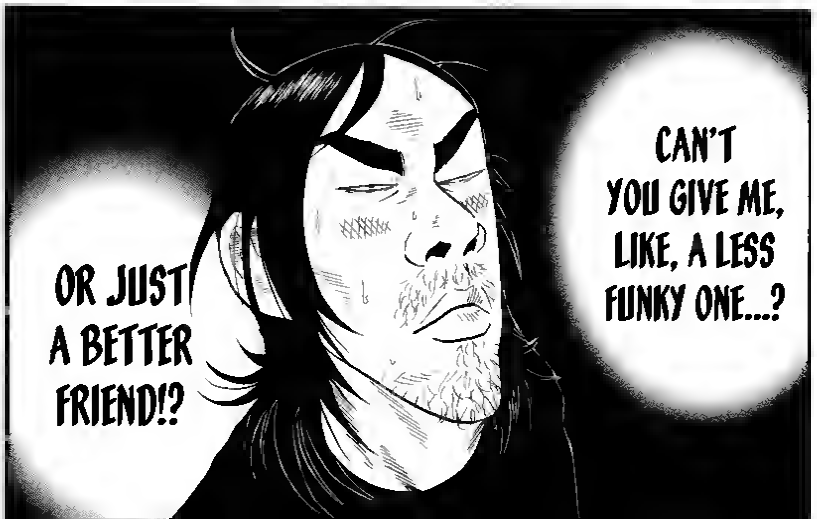
JUST YOU WATCH, YOU DAMN BASTARD!!
...I'M GONNA WIN BIIIIIG!!
I'M GONNA WIIIIN!!!

...I messed up...
...Damn, I guess I let him drink too much...
zzz
zzz
zzz
zzz
zzz
zzz

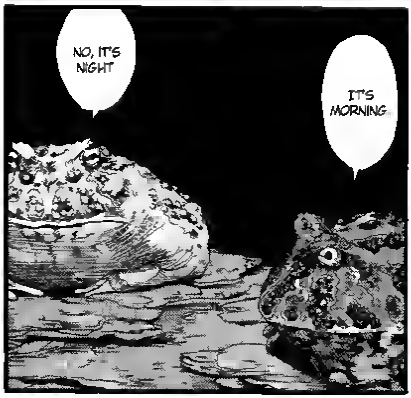
What am i gonna do now...? i somehow ended up with this idiot in my house...
zzz
zzz

THIS ISN'T WHAT I WANTED AT ALL...
THIS ISN'T WHAT I WANTED...
...HEY, MISTER, SHOOTING STAR THAT I SAW WAY BACK WHEN...

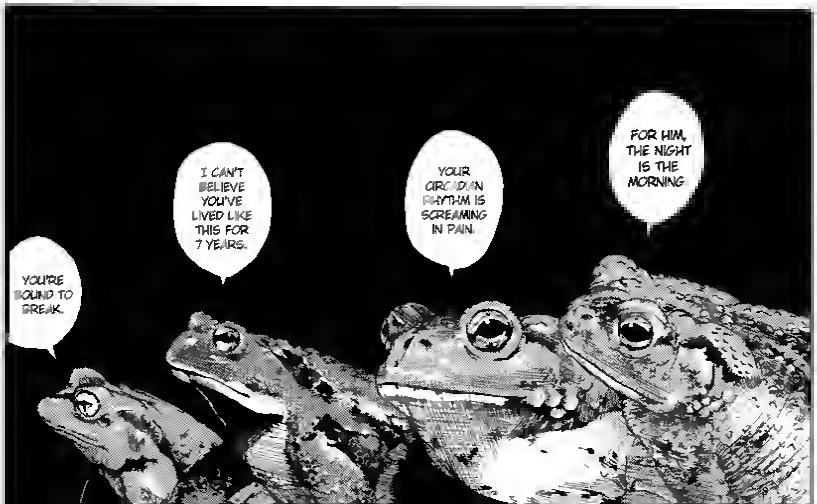
SIGH.

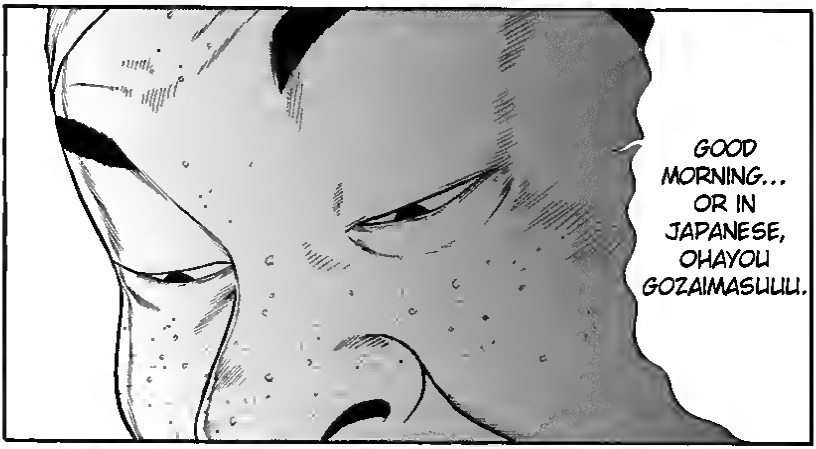

CAN'T YOU GIVE ME, LIKE, A LESS FUNKY ONE...?
OR JUST A BETTER FRIEND!?

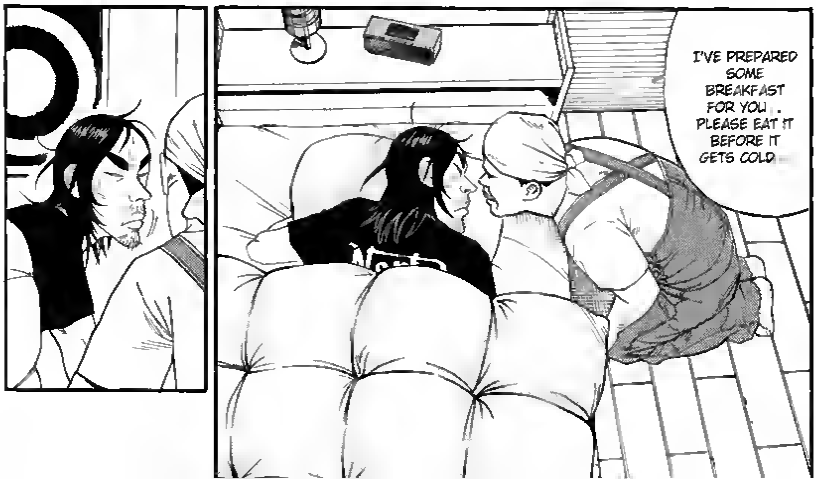
Chapter 6: The Unlucky Pursued by the Lucky


NO, IT'S NIGHT
IT'S MORNING.

TIME TO WAKE UP


YOU'RE BOUND TO BREAK.
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'VE LIVED LIKE THIS FOR 7 YEARS.
YOUR CIRCADIAN RHYTHM IS SCREAMING IN PAIN.
FOR HIM, THE NIGHT IS THE MORNING

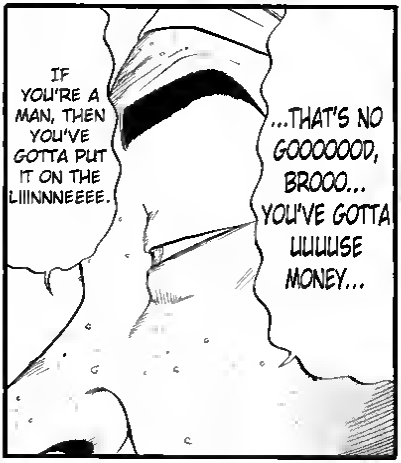

GOOD MORNING... OR IN JAPANESE, OHAYOU GOZAIMASUUU.

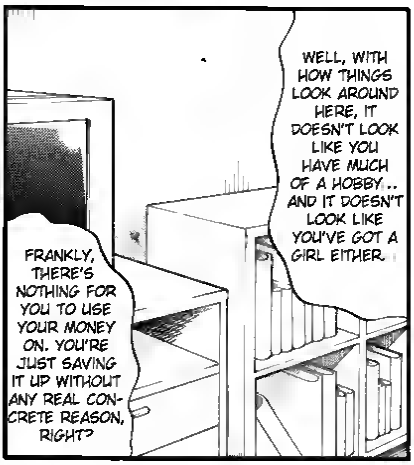

I'VE PREPARED SOME BREAKFAST FOR YOU . PLEASE EAT IT BEFORE IT GETS COLD

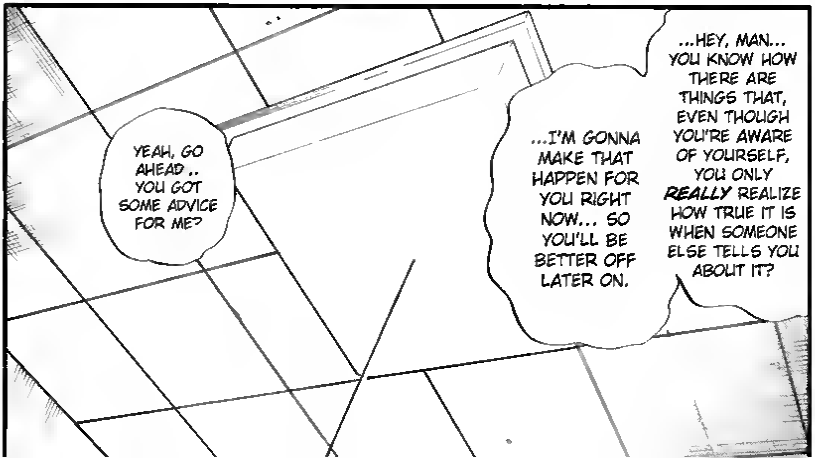
ALL THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN THERE WAS RICE..
I'M PRETTY SURE I DIDN'T HAVE ANY CHERRY TOMATOES OR EGGS... OR MISO AROUND
PLEASE.. EAT WHILE IT'S STILL WARM..
PARDON MY INTRUSION AND LACK OF MANNERS, BUT I OPENED THE REFRIGERATOR... I MADE IT WITH WHAT I FOUND...
YOUR WALLET WAS LEFT OUT BY COINCIDENCE AND I BORROWED A PALTRY SUM OF A THOUSAND YEN..
OR IN JAPANESE KO FO SU!
IF YOU TOUCH IT AGAIN I WILL KILL YOU...
YOU LISTEN TO ME... YOU ARE NEVER.. EVER TO TOUCH MY WALLET AGAIN!

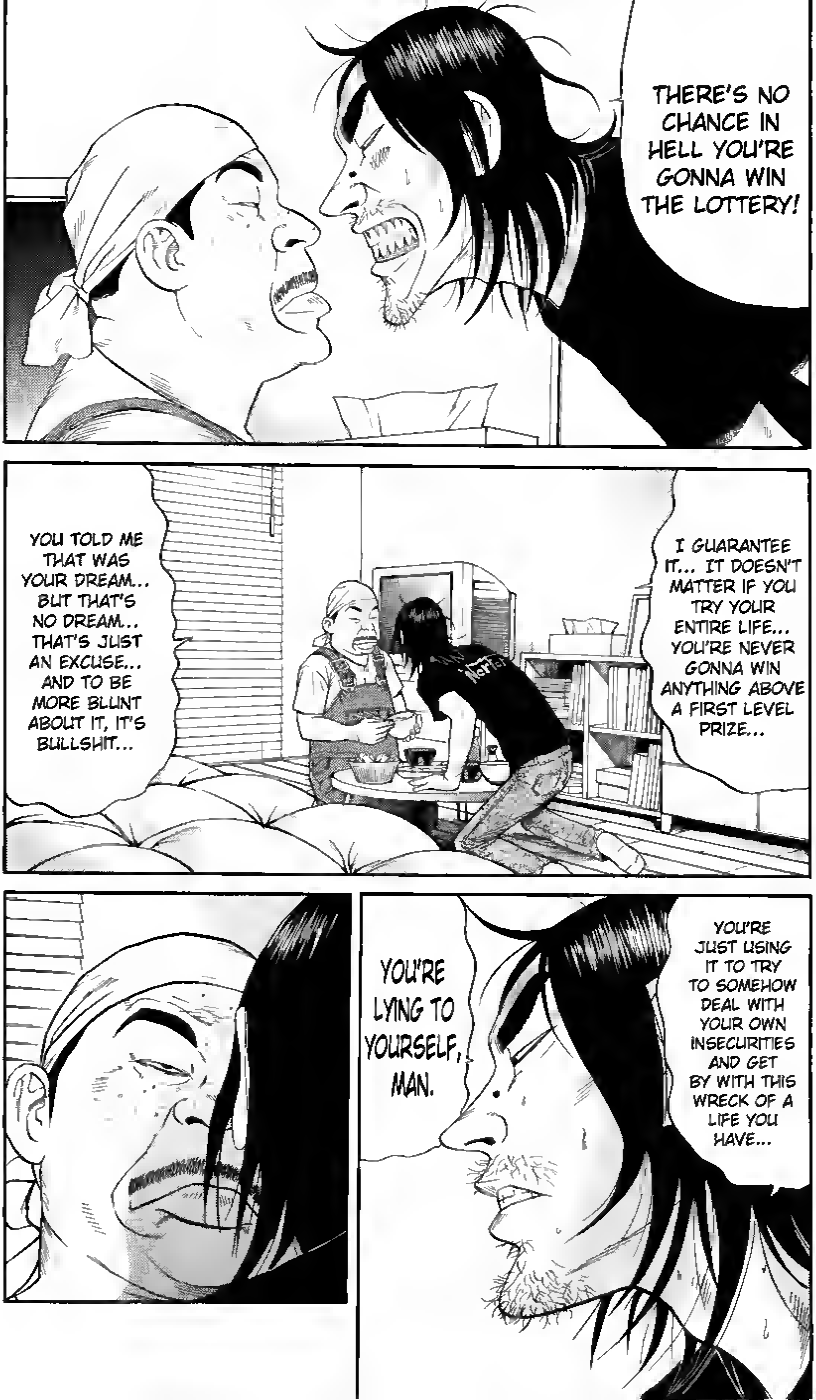
The dashi goes really well with it...
...This.. Is pretty good...
MUNCH MUNCH
HE MAY SEARCH FOR SOMEWHERE HE CAN LIVE IN PEACE WITHIN THAT PAIN, BUT HE'LL NEVER FIND IT...
THE ENTIRE LIFE OF A MAN IS MARRED WITH CRUELTY... IF HE ISN'T FIGHTING FOR WHAT'S HIS THEN HE MIGHT AS WELL ROLL OVER AND DIE.. IF HE LETS HIS GUARD DOWN, HE'LL BE SUFFERING SOMEONE'S ATTACK BEFORE HE KNOWS IT..
9.11
BEING A MAN... IT'S REALLY TOUGH, AIN'T IT?
SIGH
BUT, MAN... YOU KNOW WHAT, BRO...?
...PUT FORTH WHAT NOW?
WITH THAT IN MIND... I PUT FORTH THIS QUESTION TO YOU...
IT'S SOMETHING THAT HASN'T CHANGED SINCE ANCIENT TIMES... MAN IS A CREATURE THAT MUST CONTINUE TO FIGHT HIS ENTIRE LIFE..

W- WHY DO YOU KNOW HOW MUCH MONEY I HAVE SAVED UP!!?
WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO PUT THAT 3 MILLION YEN YOU GOT SAVED UP ON THE LINE AND GO FOR BROKE?


...THAT'S NO GOOOOOOD, BROOO... YOU'VE GOTTA UUUUUSE MONEY...
IF YOU'RE A MAN, THEN YOU'VE GOTTA PUT IT ON THE LIIINNNEEEE.


WELL, WITH HOW THINGS LOOK AROUND HERE, IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE YOU HAVE MUCH OF A HOBBY.. AND IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE YOU'VE GOT A GIRL EITHER.
FRANKLY, THERE'S NOTHING FOR YOU TO USE YOUR MONEY ON. YOU'RE JUST SAVING IT UP WITHOUT ANY REAL CONCRETE REASON, RIGHT?


...HEY, MAN... YOU KNOW HOW THERE ARE THINGS THAT, EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE AWARE OF YOURSELF, YOU ONLY *REALLY* REALIZE HOW TRUE IT IS WHEN SOMEONE ELSE TELLS YOU ABOUT IT?
...I'M GONNA MAKE THAT HAPPEN FOR YOU RIGHT NOW... SO YOU'LL BE BETTER OFF LATER ON.
YEAH, GO AHEAD.. YOU GOT SOME ADVICE FOR ME?


THERE'S NO CHANCE IN HELL YOU'RE GONNA WIN THE LOTTERY!
I GUARANTEE IT... IT DOESN'T MATTER IF YOU TRY YOUR ENTIRE LIFE... YOU'RE NEVER GONNA WIN ANYTHING ABOVE A FIRST LEVEL PRIZE...
YOU TOLD ME THAT WAS YOUR DREAM... BUT THAT'S NO DREAM... THAT'S JUST AN EXCUSE... AND TO BE MORE BLUNT ABOUT IT, IT'S BULLSHIT...
YOU'RE JUST USING IT TO TRY TO SOMEHOW DEAL WITH YOUR OWN INSECURITIES AND GET BY WITH THIS WRECK OF A LIFE YOU HAVE...
YOU'RE LYING TO YOURSELF, MAN.

AND THEN, IN THE DEAD OF WINTER, UNDER A COLD SKY, YOU'LL FALL ASLEEP DRUNK... AND THAT'LL BE ALL SHE WROTE
I'M WARNING YOU.. IF YOU DON'T HURRY UP AND TRASH THAT GRAND SCHEME OF YOURS, YOU'RE GONNA STAY HOMELESS FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE..

Hrmm... It didn't work.. This guy's used to hearing it..
He's completely immune to it...
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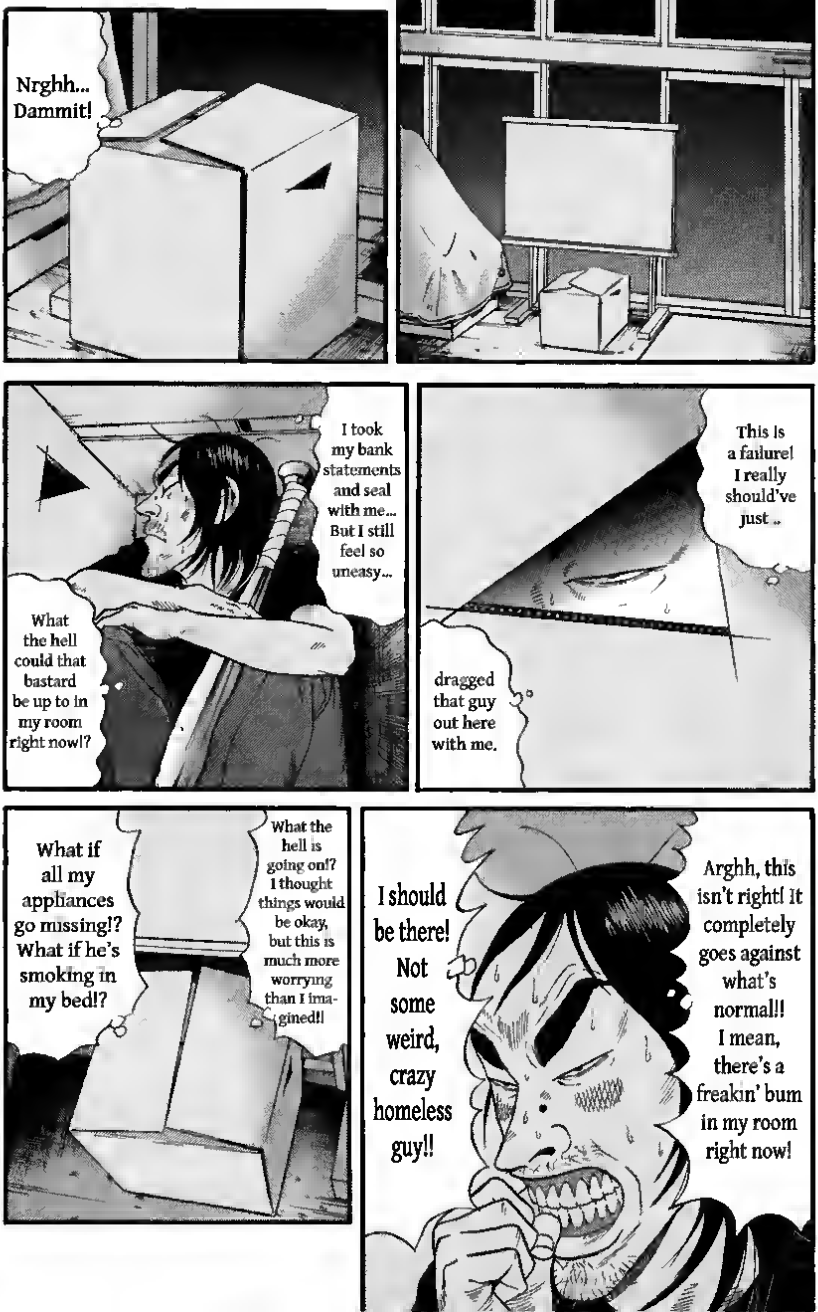
モグ

Bwaha!!?
BWA-HAA-AAA!

Fs★
ホームセンター
生鮮市場


Nrghh... Dammit!
I took my bank statements and seal with me... But I still feel so uneasy...
What the hell could that bastard be up to in my room right now!?
This is a failure! I really should've just ..
dragged that guy out here with me.
What if all my appliances go missing!? What if he's smoking in my bed!?
What the hell is going on!? I thought things would be okay, but this is much more worrying than I imagined!
I should be there! Not some weird, crazy homeless guy!!
Arghh, this isn't right! It completely goes against what's normal!! I mean, there's a freakin' bum in my room right now!

ACE
達
TV LIVE

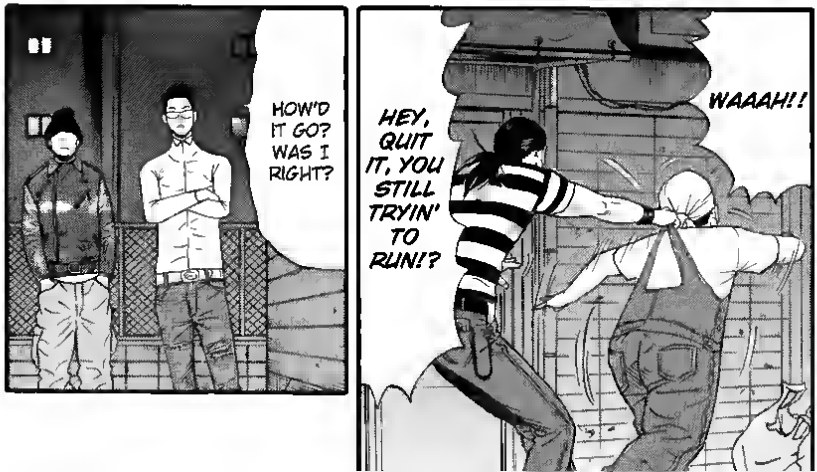
PLINK

お弁当
WHISTLE

Maybe he's gay...?
I wonder why he doesn't even have any porno mags...
コソ
コソ
Forget 2000 yen, tomorrow I should swipe 10000 yen and get myself to the pachinko ..
?
And then... when he's asleep... Eheheh...
Ah, whatever.. I'm gonna take it easy on his dime for another day...
サッ

AAH-HH!!!

AH!

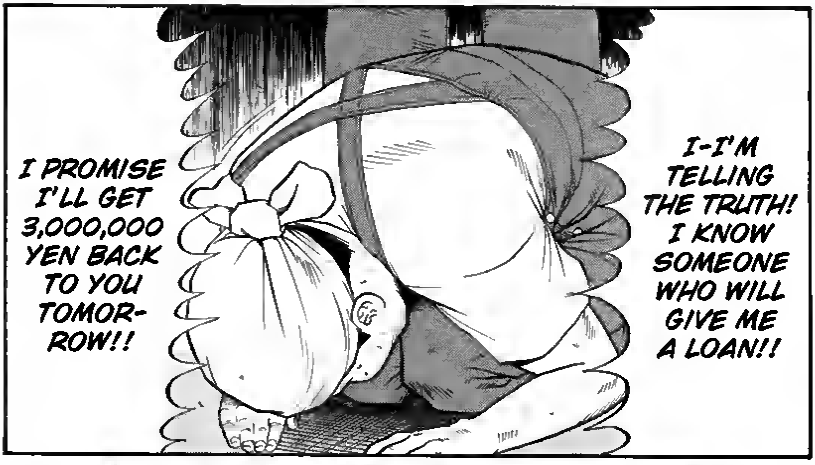

HOW'D IT GO? WAS I RIGHT?
HEY, QUIT IT, YOU STILL TRYIN' TO RUN!?
WAAAH!!

YEAH, MAN! ONE HUNDRED PERCENT! IT'S HIM ALL RIGHT, THE FREAKIN' LOTTERY MAN, DUDE!
NGH, I CAN'T BREATHE!! COME ON!!
I-I'M SORRY, SHIMADA-SAN! PLEASE LISTEN TO WHAT I HAVE TO SAY!
SHIMADA-SAN!! PLEASE!! SIR!!?
YOU'RE AMAZING, SHIMADA-SAN. YOU RECOGNIZED HIM IN JUST HALF A SECOND!!
I KNOW, RIGHT? I TOLD YOU MY PERCEPTION WAS NO JOKE.
MORISHITA, I'M SORTA TERRIFYING, AINT I!? THIS IS ALL SORTA FREAKY, ISN'T IT?
I MEAN, TAKE A LOOK AT THE LUCK I'VE HAD THESE LAST DAYS!! I WONDER IF I'VE BEEN POSSESSED OR SOMETHIN'!?
YEAH, MAN!

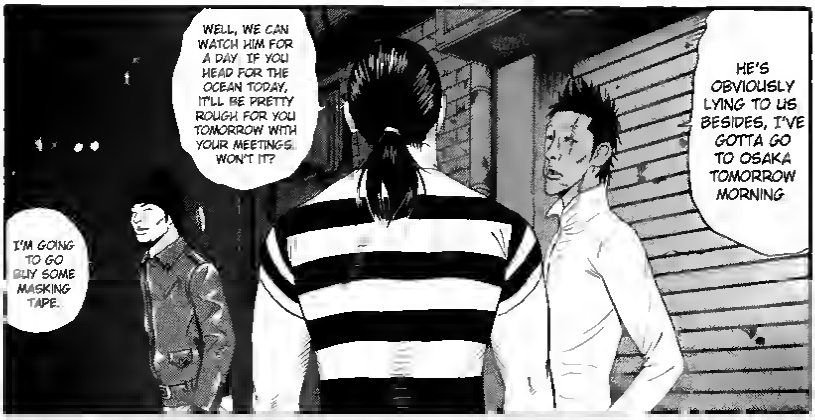
HUH?
SHIMADA-SAN... I'M... TRYING TO FIND A JOB RIGHT NOW!!
PLEASE, CUT ME SOME SLACK!
WHAT?
SHIMADA-SAN, I'M BEGGING YOU!! I'M TRYING HARD!!
YOU KNOW HOW IT IS! THERE'S NO WORK OUT THERE!!
"GO TO HELL, COCK OF AN ASSWIPE" AND A LOT OF OTHER GREAT INSULTS... I HEARD THAT VOICE MAIL TOO.
WHAT'D THIS GUY SAY AGAIN? WHAT'D HE SAY WHEN HE RAN AWAY?
OH, HEY, WHY DIDN'T YOU EVEN GO SOMEWHERE FAR AWAY?
C'MON MAN, YOU KNOW THAT'S NOT GONNA FLY. WE TOLD YOU, IF YOU RUN ONE MORE TIME, WE'RE GONNA KILL YOU.

BUT, YOU... YOU'RE AN EXCEPTION! YOU EVEN SAID SO YOURSELF... "IF YOU THINK YOU CAN KILL ME, THEN GO AHEAD AND TRY!" AND THEN, WHAT WAS IT...? "I'LL STUFF THAT GLASS EYE OF YOURS UP YOUR ASS"?
IN OUR LINE OF WORK, WE WOULDN'T USUALLY KILL SOMEONE OVER 50,000 OR A 100,000 YEN... I MEAN, IF WE DID THAT EVERY TIME IT HAPPENED, IT WOULDN'T BE WORTH IT FOR US...
YOU DON'T HAVE TO APOLOGIZE ANYMORE.
IT'S FINE... I DON'T CARE ABOUT THE MONEY...
I'LL PAY YOU BACK! I PROMISE I'LL PAY YOU BACK YOUR MONEY!!
I-I WAS JUST BABBLING THEN! I WAS DRUNK! I'M REALLY SORRY!!

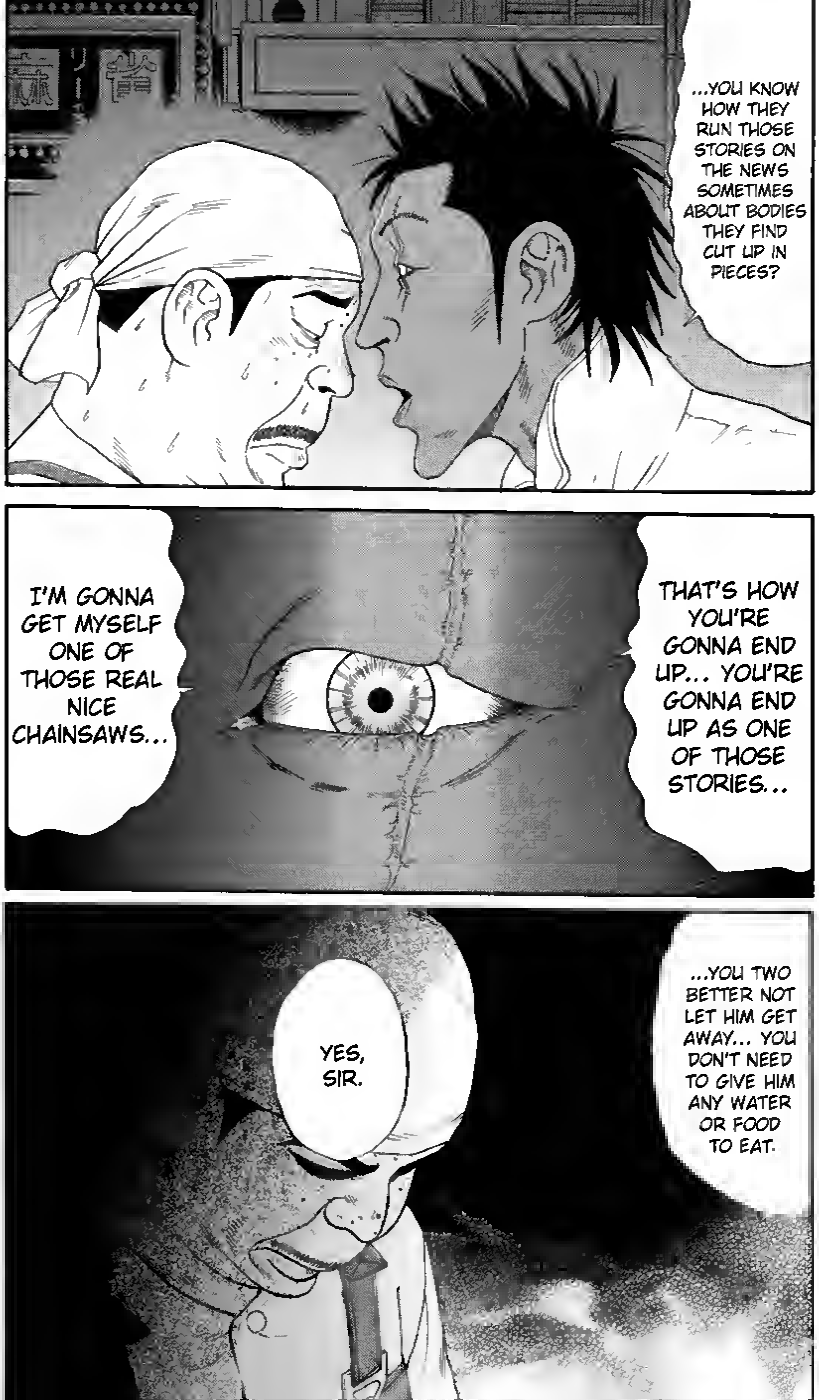
HATE TO ASK YOU THIS, MORISHITA, BUT BRING THE CAR AROUND FOR ME... WE'RE GOING TO THE OCEAN.
GOT IT.
S-SHIMADA-SAN! P-PLEASE... WAIT A SECOND! I'VE GOT MONEY! I PROMISE I'LL GET IT TO YOU TOMORROW! I PROMISE I'LL PAY YOU BACK 3,000,000 YEN TOMORROW!!
HAHA!..HE, HE NEVER CHANGES, DOES HE?


I-I'M TELLING THE TRUTH! I KNOW SOMEONE WHO WILL GIVE ME A LOAN!!
I PROMISE I'LL GET 3,000,000 YEN BACK TO YOU TOMOR-ROW!!

3,000,000 YEN, HUH? HOW MUCH IS THIS GUY IN THE HOLE FOR AGAIN?
I THINK IT WAS ABOUT 2,000,000? I'M PRETTY SURE HE DIDN'T GET TO 3.
WHAT SHOULD WE DO, SHIMADA-SAN? YOU WANT TO WAIT A DAY AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS?


I'M GOING TO GO BUY SOME MASKING TAPE.
WELL, WE CAN WATCH HIM FOR A DAY. IF YOU HEAD FOR THE OCEAN TODAY, IT'LL BE PRETTY ROUGH FOR YOU TOMORROW WITH YOUR MEETINGS, WON'T IT?
HE'S OBVIOUSLY LYING TO US BESIDES, I'VE GOTTA GO TO OSAKA TOMORROW MORNING

STAND UP, PIGGY.
HEY...


...YOU KNOW HOW THEY RUN THOSE STORIES ON THE NEWS SOMETIMES ABOUT BODIES THEY FIND CUT UP IN PIECES?
I'M GONNA GET MYSELF ONE OF THOSE REAL NICE CHAINSAWS...
THAT'S HOW YOU'RE GONNA END UP... YOU'RE GONNA END UP AS ONE OF THOSE STORIES...
YES, SIR.
...YOU TWO BETTER NOT LET HIM GET AWAY... YOU DON'T NEED TO GIVE HIM ANY WATER OR FOOD TO EAT.

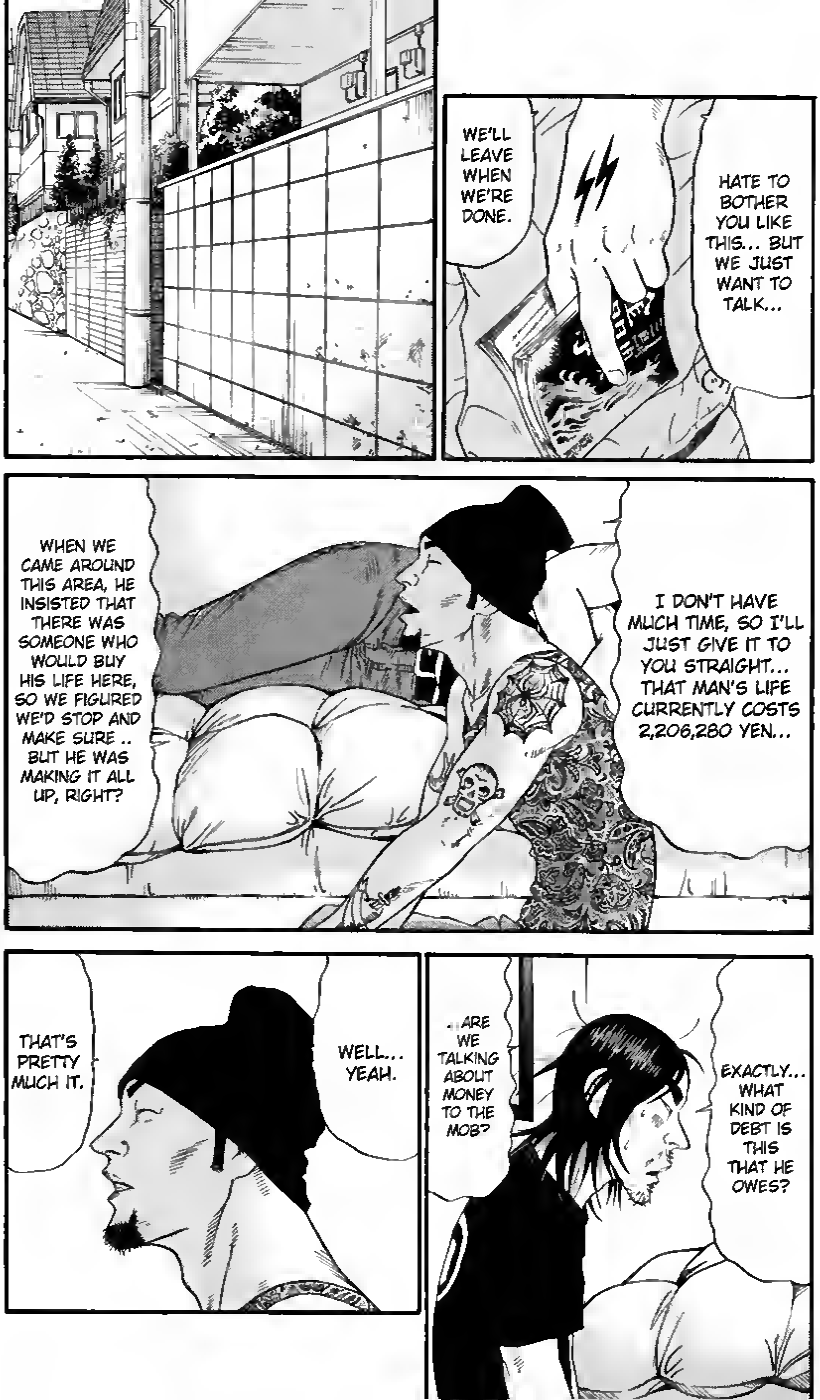
Chapter 7: Shopping

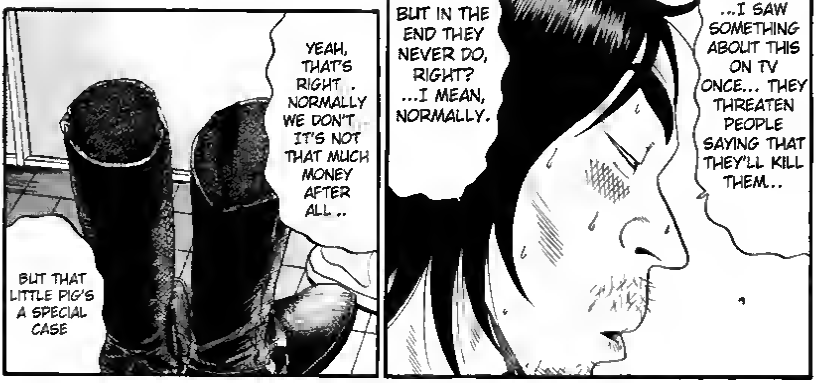
HEY BRO, THERE'S NO PAPER Y'KNOW, TEEEPEEE? I'M IN A JAM HERE MAAAAAAN
THAT GUY'S NOT MY FRIEND... THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH HIM AS A HUMAN.
BUT EVEN IF I LOOK PAST THOSE FLAWS... I THINK IT'S A BIT TOO MUCH FOR ME TO HANDLE...
I CAN'T DEAL WITH TALKING TO OTHER PEOPLE...
MUCH LESS LIVING WITH SOMEONE ELSE...
Hrngh... I'm so tired...
My marathons are a piece of cake compared to this...
BY THE END OF TODAY...
I NEED TO GET HIM GONE AND OUT OF MY LIFE
I DON'T CARE ABOUT THE INFORMATION HE HAS ANYMORE...
ANYWAYS, I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THIS...

...I'M HOMEEEE.
ガチャ
OH, WELCOME BAAAAACK.

Huh!?
AH, NO, IT'S OKAY...
SORRY, TOMIOKA-SAN... WE MADE OURSELVES COMFOR-TABLE.
ZZZ
ZZZ
WELL... I'M USED TO IT...
THAT'S GOTTA BE ROUGH FOR YOU... YOUR MORNINGS AND NIGHTS ARE COMPLETELY REVERSED...
HE'S IN THE REST-ROOM
Y'KNOW... HE LOOKS SORTA LIKE A TOAD...
UH... HAVE YOU SEEN A GUY AROUND?

ヨク
ヨク
CREAK
Norton
ZZZ
ヨク
ZZZ
ヨク
IT'S HIS...
WE'RE HERE TO COLLECT ON A DEBT...


HATE TO BOTHER YOU LIKE THIS... BUT WE JUST WANT TO TALK...
WE'LL LEAVE WHEN WE'RE DONE.
I DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME, SO I'LL JUST GIVE IT TO YOU STRAIGHT... THAT MAN'S LIFE CURRENTLY COSTS 2,206,280 YEN...
WHEN WE CAME AROUND THIS AREA, HE INSISTED THAT THERE WAS SOMEONE WHO WOULD BUY HIS LIFE HERE, SO WE FIGURED WE'D STOP AND MAKE SURE .. BUT HE WAS MAKING IT ALL UP, RIGHT?
EXACTLY... WHAT KIND OF DEBT IS THIS THAT HE OWES?
..ARE WE TALKING ABOUT MONEY TO THE MOB?
WELL... YEAH.
THAT'S PRETTY MUCH IT.


...I SAW SOMETHING ABOUT THIS ON TV ONCE... THEY THREATEN PEOPLE SAYING THAT THEY'LL KILL THEM...
BUT IN THE END THEY NEVER DO, RIGHT? ...I MEAN, NORMALLY.
YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT. NORMALLY WE DON'T. IT'S NOT THAT MUCH MONEY AFTER ALL..
BUT THAT LITTLE PIG'S A SPECIAL CASE

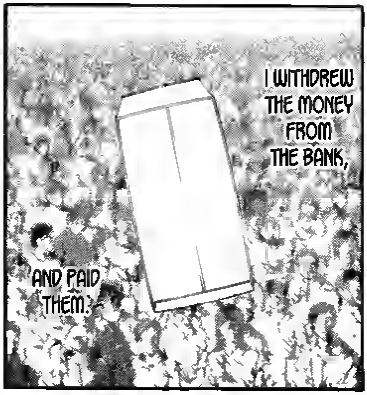
THAT PORKER WENT AND MADE THE ONE PERSON HE SHOULDN'T HAVE ANGRY. HE SURE DID A HELL OF A JOB AT IT TOO. HE DID EVERYTHING HE COULD POSSIBLY DO TO KEEP ON PISSING HIM OFF...
ZZZ
ZZZ
HE LIED COUNTLESS NUMBERS OF TIMES... RAN FROM US... AND CALLED US ALL SORTS OF DIFFERENT NAMES BEFORE DISAPPEARING... BUT WE FINALLY CAUGHT HIM YESTERDAY.

TO BE HONEST, WE DON'T LIKE DOING THIS EITHER.. WE DON'T WANT TO MURDER PEOPLE...
AND WE'RE TALKING ABOUT CHOPPING HIM INTO LITTLE PIECES WITH A CHAINSAW TOO... JUST THINKING ABOUT IT MAKES THE HAIR ON MY BODY STAND UP.

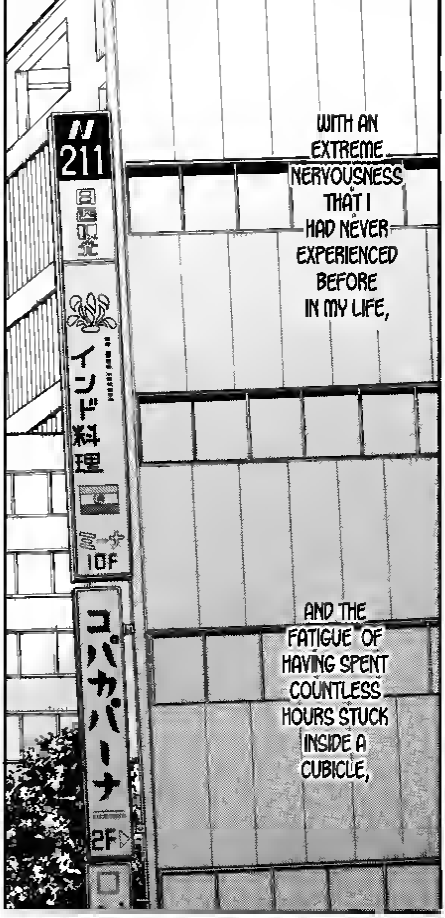
MY BOSS IS ALWAYS SERIOUS ABOUT THESE THINGS...
I WISH THAT WERE THE CASE... BUT IT'S NOT.
THAT'S CLEARLY JUST GOT TO BE A THREAT, RIGHT?
ARE YOU SERIOUS...? WITH A CHAINSAW ..? THAT'S CRAZY...
IT'S FINE WHETHER YOU WANT TO PAY OR NOT IF YOU DON'T PAY, THAT'S OKAY. . I'M SURE THAT'S WHAT MY BOSS IS HOPING FOR ANYWAYS. .
OH... I JUST WANTED TO MAKE THIS CLEAR BUT, I'M NOT TRYING TO THREATEN YOU OR ANYTHING RIGHT NOW ..
...UNLESS A MIRACLE HAPPENS.
GOING TO... GET KILLED?
I...I'M GOING TO TRUST YOU AND ASK YOU THIS... IS HE REALLY, HONESTLY, TRUTHFULLY, SERIOUSLY, LITERALLY, DEEEFINITELY...

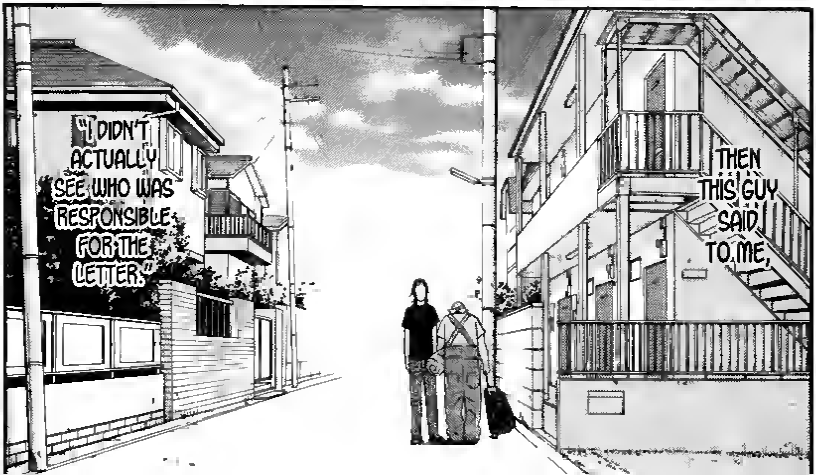
I'LL BUY HIM.
...FINE.
I'LL PAY.
YOU'LL PAY?
.....

AND YOU'RE GOING TO PAY OFF THE DEBT HE RACKED UP FROM GAMBLING?
...YOU JUST MET THIS TOTAL GARBAGE DUMP OF A WACK JOB BY CHANCE, ONLY TWO OR THREE DAYS AGO...
IF YOU WERE ME, WHAT WOULD YOU DO? ...YOU'D PAY, RIGHT?
HRMN- NNNGH...
BUT... HE'S GOING TO BE KILLED OTHER- WISE, RIGHT?
...THERE'S NO OTHER CHOICE, IS THERE...?
MY MEMORY IS A BIT HAZY
AROUND THESE PARTS.
THAT KIND OF TRASH WILL ALWAYS BE TRASH. I WOULDN'T GIVE A SHIT ABOUT WHAT WAS GONNA HAPPEN TO HIM
I REALLY DON'T KNOW— I DON'T THINK I WOULD PAY..


I WITHDREW THE MONEY FROM THE BANK,
AND PAID THEM.

THANKS, YOU'VE BEEN A REAL HELP
FOR SOME REASON, THE GUY WHO WAS TALKING TO ME GAVE ME BACK 200,000 YEN.
VRO-RORO-ROOM


211
インド料理
10F
コパカバーナ
2F
WITH AN EXTREME NERVOUSNESS THAT I HAD NEVER EXPERIENCED BEFORE IN MY LIFE,
AND THE FATIGUE OF HAVING SPENT COUNTLESS HOURS STUCK INSIDE A CUBICLE,


"I DIDN'T ACTUALLY SEE WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LETTER."
THEN THIS GUY SAID TO ME,

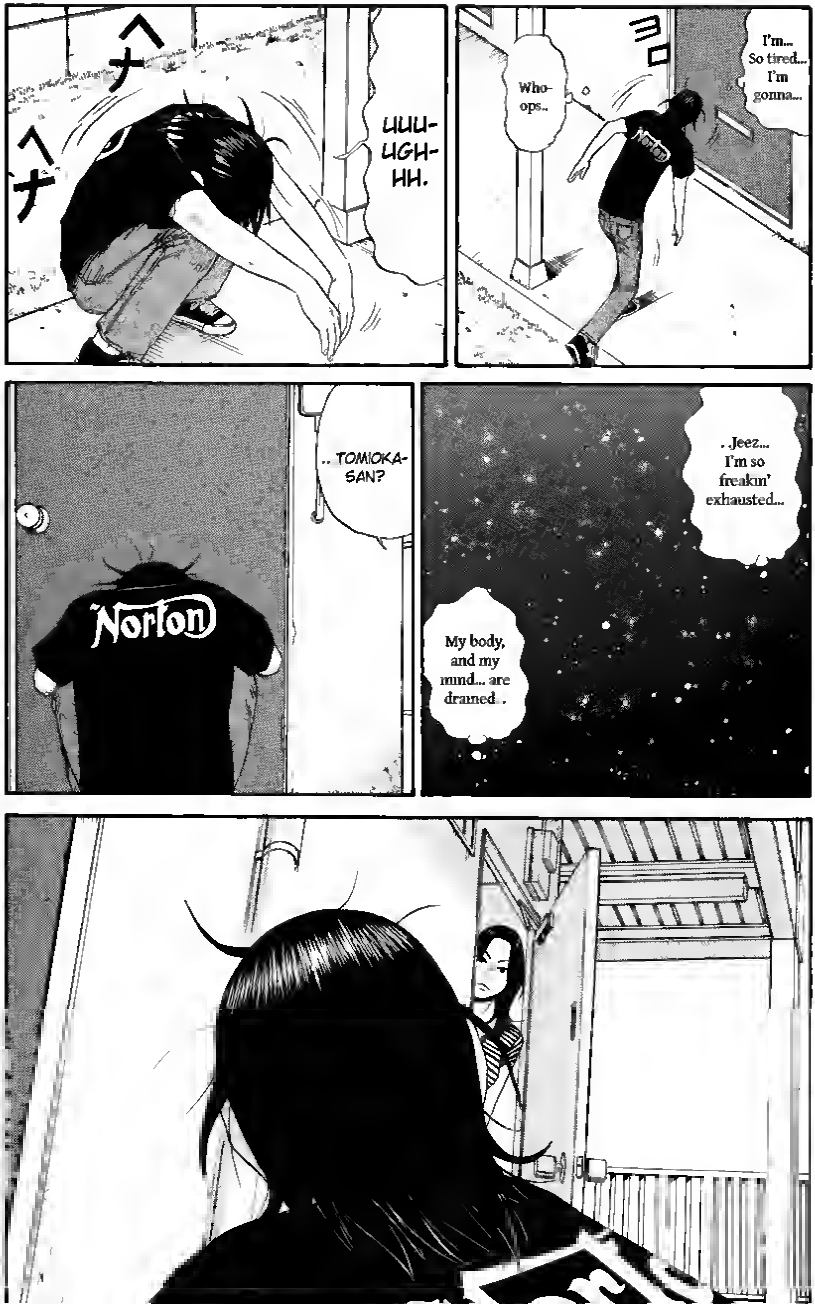
JUST GO...
...FORGET ABOUT IT ALREADY...

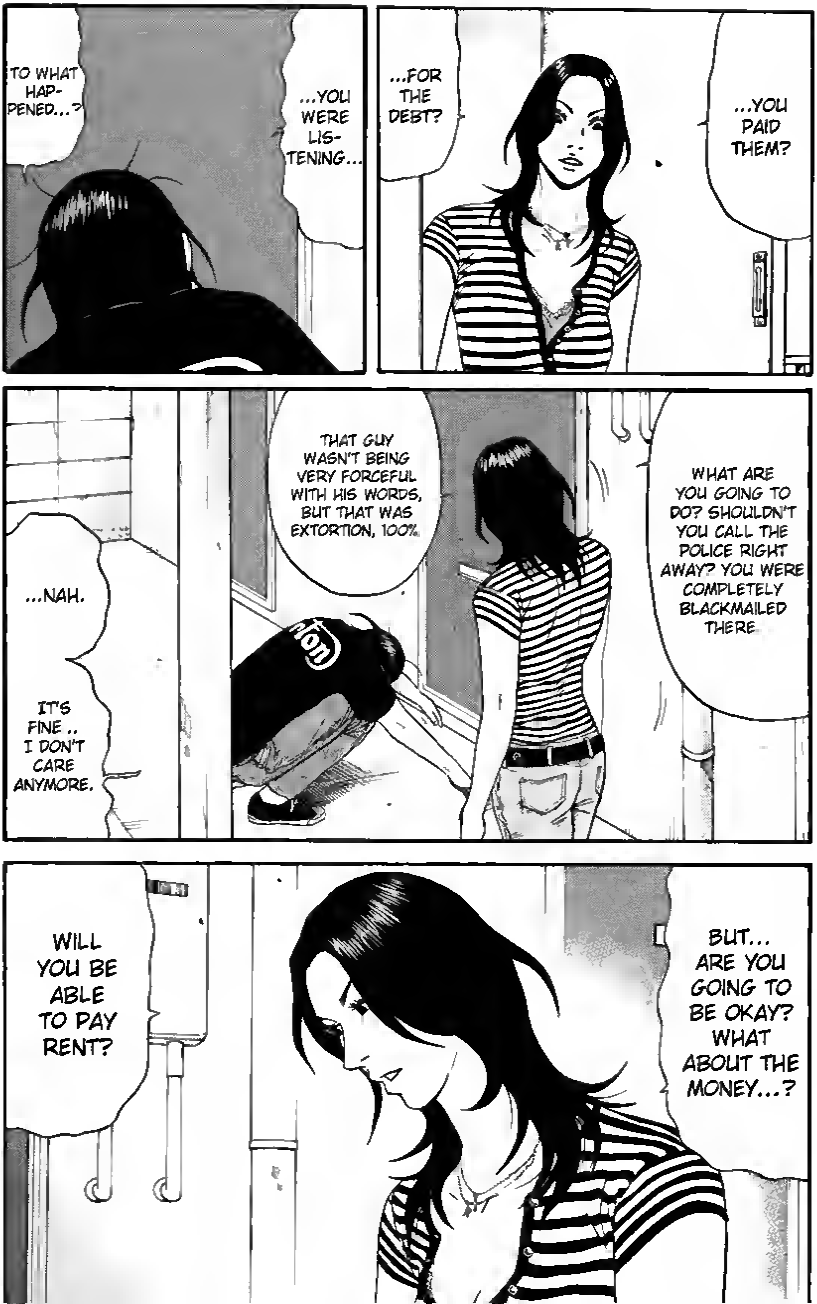
I SAID IT WAS FINE, DIDN'T I!? I'M TIRED! GET OUT OF HERE ALREADY!!
BRO!! I'M GONNA DEVOTE THE REST OF MY LIFE TO YOU! DO WHATEVER YOU WANT!! PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SOCK ME ONE!

I PROMISE! ...I WILL CHANGE!!
I...I WILL RETURN THIS FAVOR!! ...I STAKE MY LIFE ON IT!

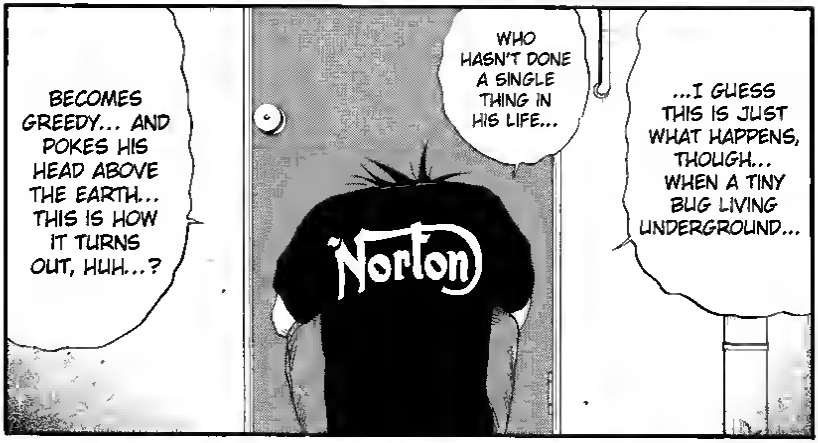
BUT FROM NOW ON, YOU *ARE* GOD.... YOU'RE MY GOD!!
UGAHHH... I TOLD YOU BEFORE... THAT THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS GOD!

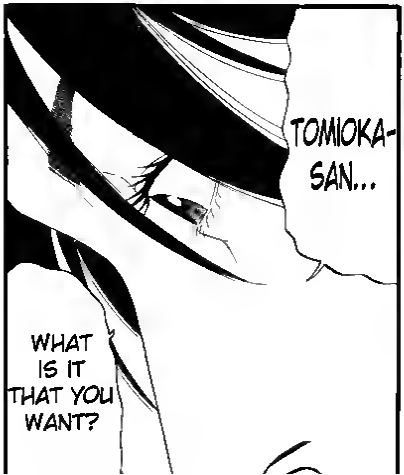
I'LL DEFINITELY PAY YOU BACK!
FOR NOW... JUST MAKE SURE YOU WORK HARD, OKAY?
ガラガラ
PHEEEEEEEEEW.

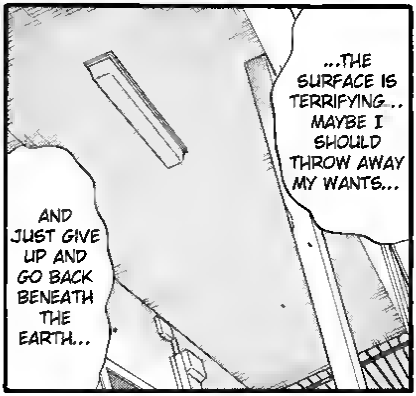

ヘナ
ヘナ
UUU-UGH-HH.
ヨロ
Who-ops..
I'm... So tired... I'm gonna...
Norton
.. TOMIOKA-SAN?
Norton
. Jeez... I'm so freakin' exhausted...
My body, and my mind... are drained. .

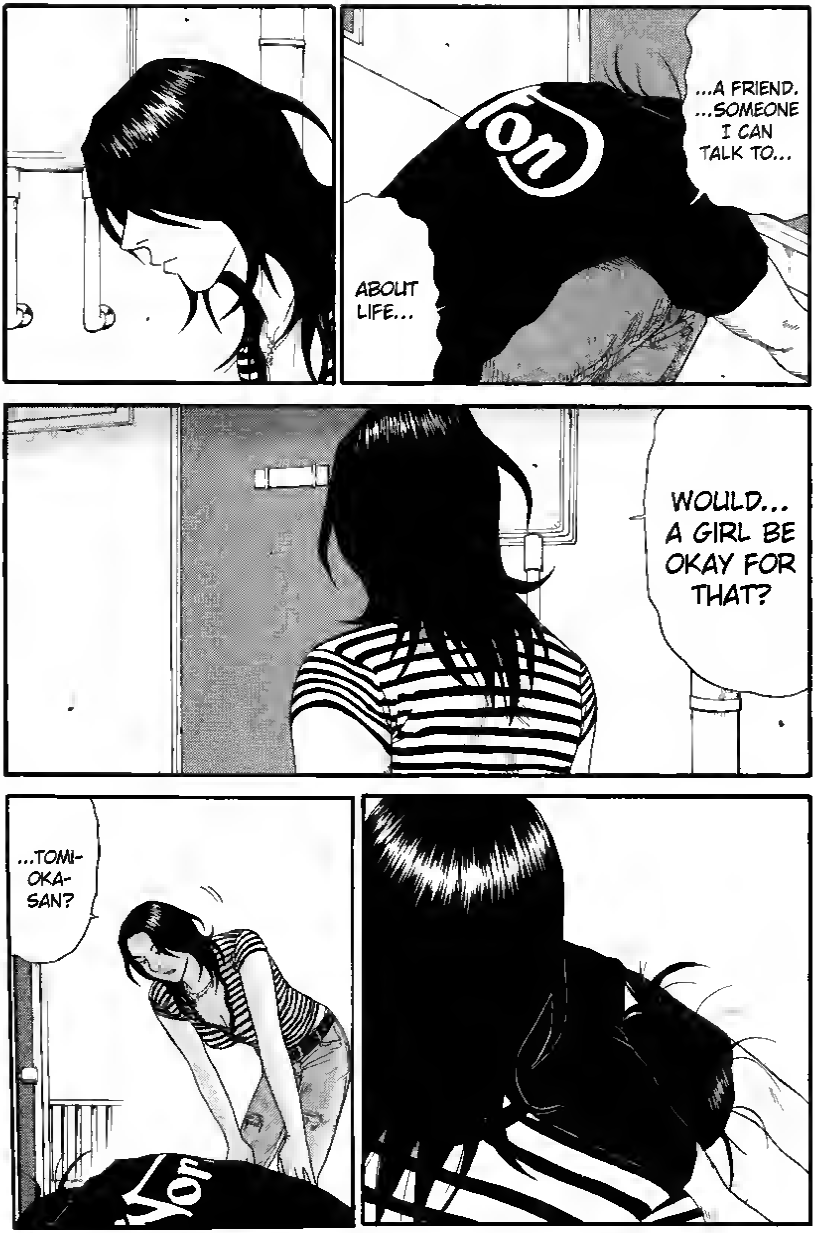

...YOU WERE LISTENING...
TO WHAT HAPPENED...?
...YOU PAID THEM?
...FOR THE DEBT?
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO? SHOULDN'T YOU CALL THE POLICE RIGHT AWAY? YOU WERE COMPLETELY BLACKMAILED THERE.
THAT GUY WASN'T BEING VERY FORCEFUL WITH HIS WORDS, BUT THAT WAS EXTORTION, 100%.
...NAH.
IT'S FINE.. I DON'T CARE ANYMORE.
BUT... ARE YOU GOING TO BE OKAY? WHAT ABOUT THE MONEY...?
WILL YOU BE ABLE TO PAY RENT?

I'M SO INCRE-DIBLY TIRED...
PHOOO-OOOOO... SO MUCH HAS HAPPENED RECENTLY...


BECOMES GREEDY... AND POKES HIS HEAD ABOVE THE EARTH... THIS IS HOW IT TURNS OUT, HUH...?
WHO HASN'T DONE A SINGLE THING IN HIS LIFE...
...I GUESS THIS IS JUST WHAT HAPPENS, THOUGH... WHEN A TINY BUG LIVING UNDERGROUND...

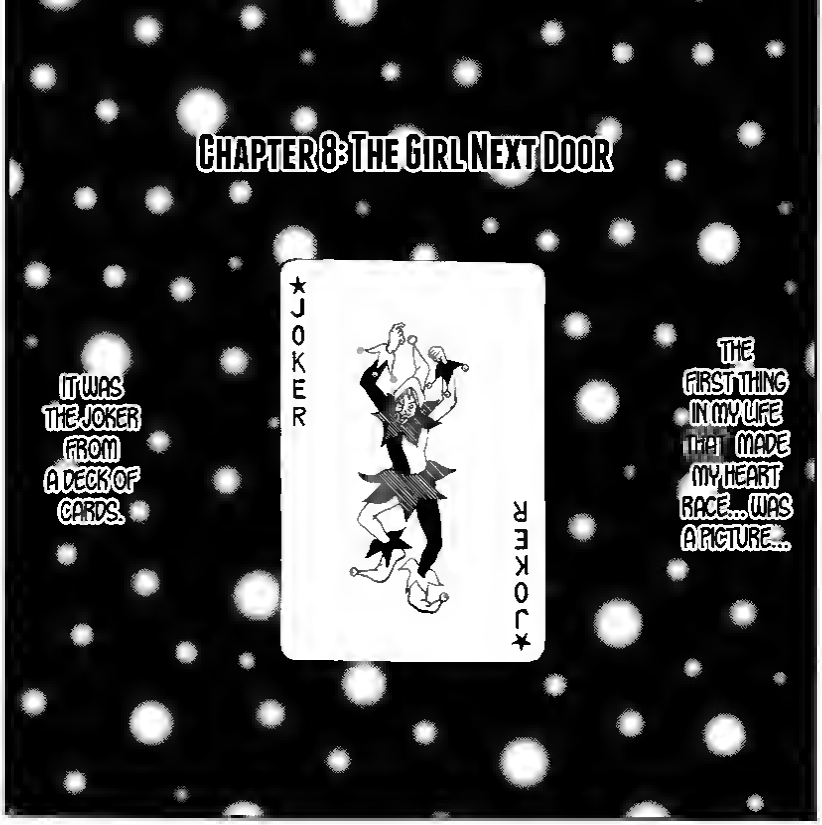

TOMIOKA-SAN...
WHAT IS IT THAT YOU WANT?

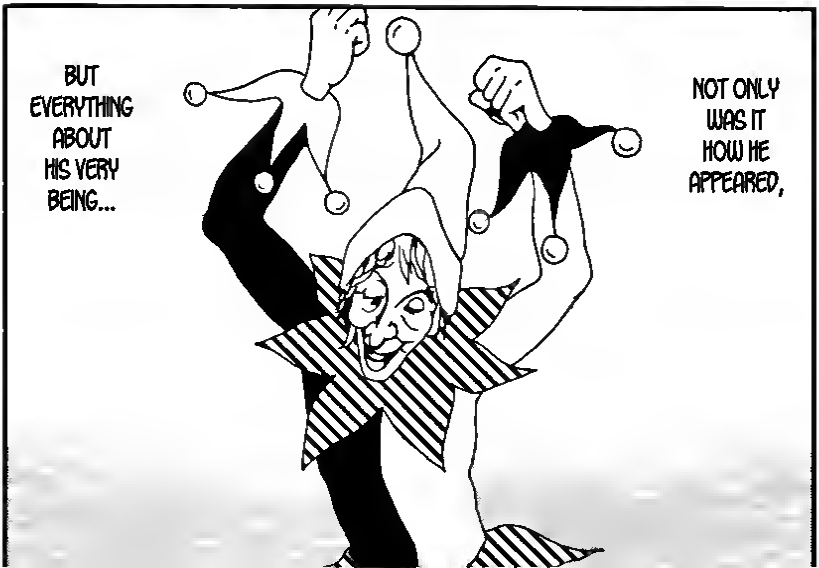

...THE SURFACE IS TERRIFYING... MAYBE I SHOULD THROW AWAY MY WANTS...
AND JUST GIVE UP AND GO BACK BENEATH THE EARTH...


...A FRIEND.
...SOMEONE I CAN TALK TO...
ABOUT LIFE...
WOULD... A GIRL BE OKAY FOR THAT?
...TOMI-OKA-SAN?

zzz
zzz
„He's asleep.“
zzz

Chapter 8: The Girl Next Door





I DATED AN OLDER MAN WHO HAD DECLARED THIS TO ME BEFORE...
"YOU'RE NOT STRANGE."
THIS WORRIED AND HURT ME!...
THAT DIDN'T CHANGE, EVEN AFTER I BECAME AN ADULT. I HEARD IT ALL THE TIME FROM PEOPLE AROUND ME, THAT IT WAS "TOO BAD" THAT I WAS SO "STRANGE."
HE LIED TO ME FOR AN ENTIRE TWO YEARS...
FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE END,
BUT THAT PERSON WAS LYING TO ME.
ARE YOU THE TYPE OF PERSON THAT WOULD TELL LIES?
ZZZ
ZZZ
TOKIOKA-SAN...

ZZZ
ZZZ
ZZZ
ZZZ
.....
PHOO...

I CAN'T GET OVER HOW UNBELIEVABLY COOL THIS GUY IS!!
ZZZ
ZZZ
ARGH!! HE'S SO COOL!!

HE'S JUST SO COOL!! IT'S MAKING MY EYES SPIN!!

BUT NOW THAT I'VE GOT HIM RIGHT IN FRONT OF MY EYES, I COULD SPEND HOURS STARING AT HIM AND IT WOULDN'T CHANGE A THING!...
YAWN
I KNEW THAT ALREADY FROM THE FIRST TIME I SAW HIM,
SCRATCH

I'm not trespassing illegally here or anything!
Whoa! Wait a second here! Let's get it straight. I'm no pervert, okay!?

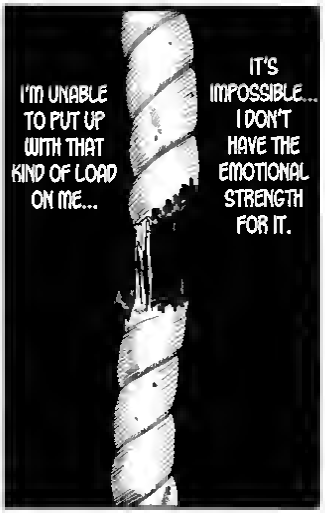
And, sure, I could've just gone back to my place after that, but that would've been careless 'cause the door would've been unlocked! What if a thief showed up or something!!?
He fell asleep outside so all I did was carry him inside to put him in bed! I couldn't have just let him catch a cold, could I!!?

I'M NO PERVERT.
DON'T MISIN-TERPRET MY KINDNESS.
I'M NOT A PER-VERT...

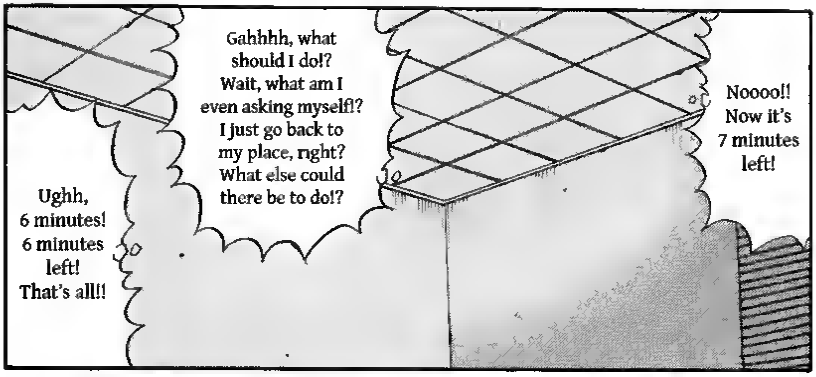
zzz
zzz
Tomoka-san, please listen to what I have to say...
I can no longer swim...
Phew..
I WAS ALMOST ABOUT TO DROWN!!
AGHH!
GWAH!
IT'S TOO SCARY!!
CALLED LOVE!!!
ベタ
IN THE SEA
SO I'M NOT GOING TO FALL IN LOVE WITH ANYONE ANYMORE."
"WELL, IT LOOKS LIKE I'M JUST AN IDIOT,
IN THE WINTER OF MY 21ST YEAR, I SWORE THIS TO MYSELF...
THREE YEARS AGO,

"IF I'M JUST GOING TO BE BETRAYED BY THE PERSON THAT I LOVE...
THEN I WON'T LOVE ANYONE ELSE MY ENTIRE LIFE".
YOSHINO-SAAAAAN, OVER HERE! THIS WAY!
HOO DAMMIT WHAT THE HELL IS SHE DOING?
HEY C'MON, STOP IT WITH THE POTTY MOUTHIN'!
POOPITY POOP! POOPING POOP!
POOP! POOPY POOP POOP POOP!

...BUT...


I'M UNABLE TO PUT UP WITH THAT KIND OF LOAD ON ME...
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE... I DON'T HAVE THE EMOTIONAL STRENGTH FOR IT.

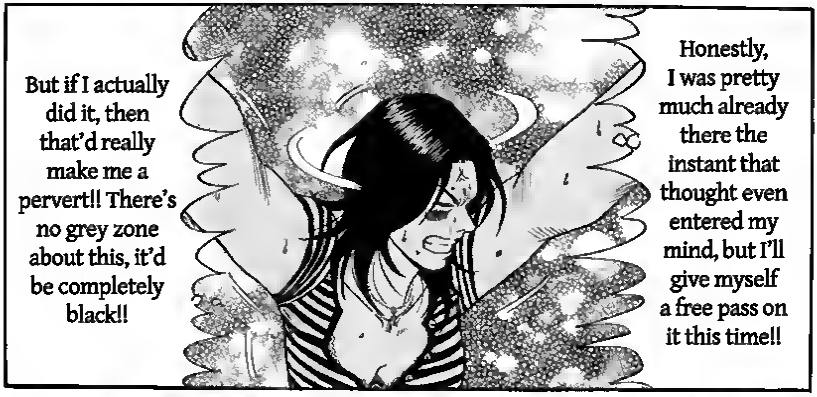
I MIGHT END UP BREAKING THE VOW THAT I SWORE BACK THEN...
TODAY, IT FEELS LIKE...
There's only 8 minutes left before this amazing moment that occurred by sheer coincidence disappears completely!!
Once it hits 9 the alarm is gonna start ringing and then he's gonna go straight to work!!
Why'd the time pass by so quickly!?
What!? It's 8:52 already!?
8.52

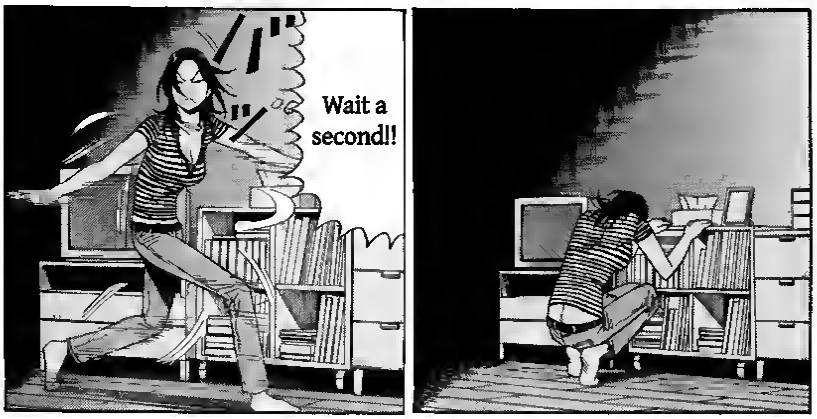

Ughh, 6 minutes! 6 minutes left! That's all!!
Gahhhh, what should I do!? Wait, what am I even asking myself!? I just go back to my place, right? What else could there be to do!?
Noooo!! Now it's 7 minutes left!

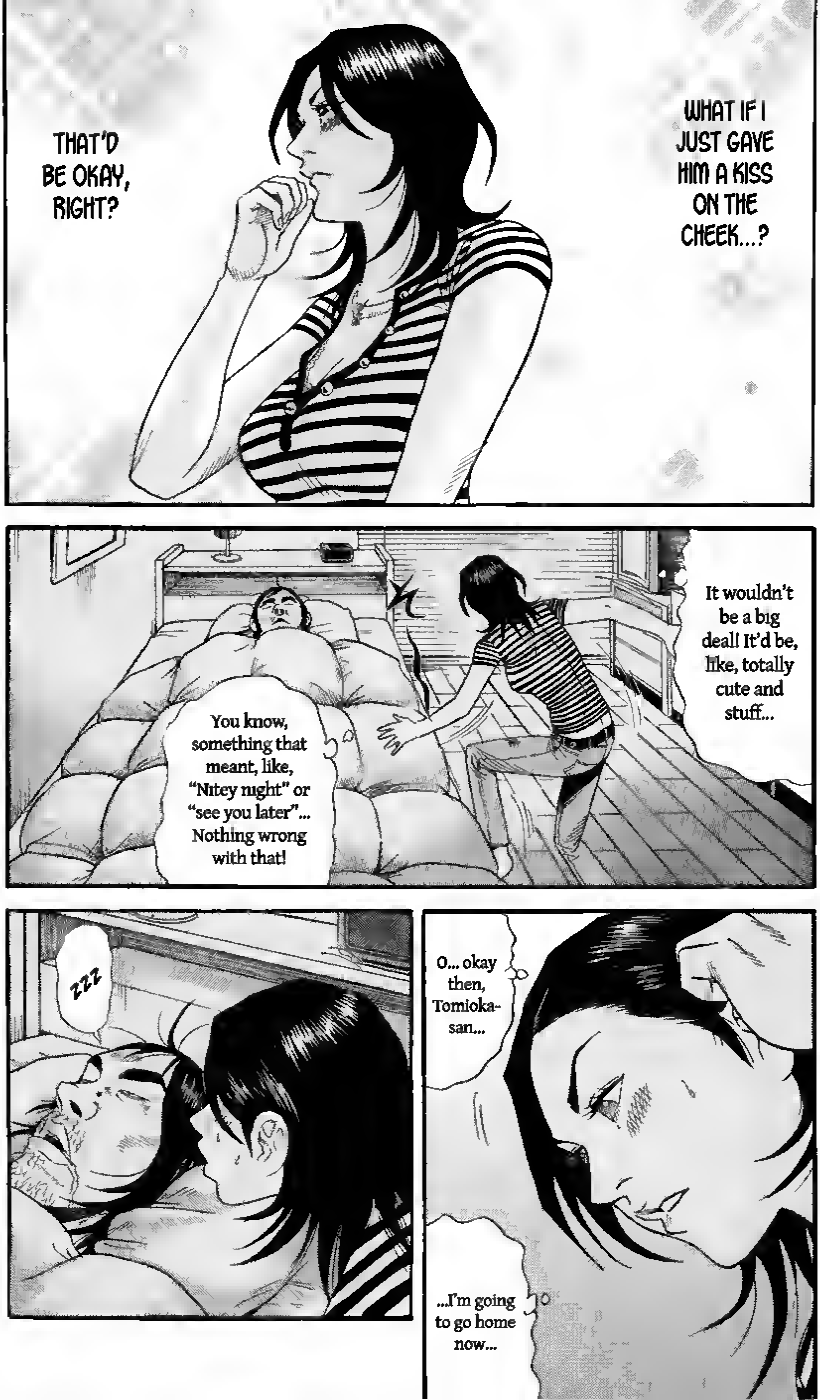
zzz
EHRMM...
UHMMM...
zzz

KISS HIM?
WHAT IF I...
W-WHAT SHOULD I DO...?

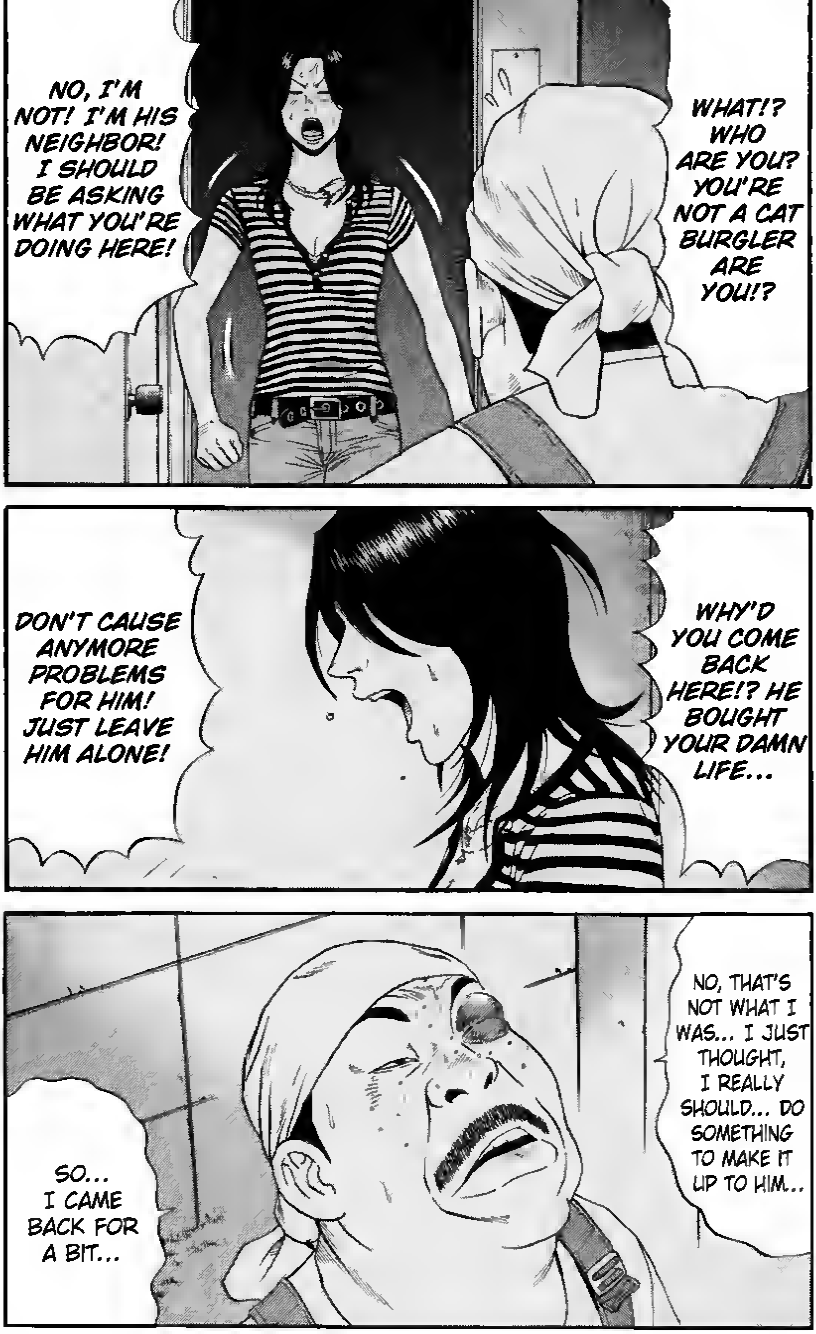
That'd put me completely 100% in pervert creeper territory!!!
Whoa! No! I can't do that!! That's out of the question!!


But if I actually did it, then that'd really make me a pervert!! There's no grey zone about this, it'd be completely black!!
Honestly, I was pretty much already there the instant that thought even entered my mind, but I'll give myself a free pass on it this time!!


Wait a second!!


THAT'D BE OKAY, RIGHT?
WHAT IF I JUST GAVE HIM A KISS ON THE CHEEK...?
It wouldn't be a big deal! It'd be, like, totally cute and stuff...
You know, something that meant, like, "Nitey night" or "see you later"... Nothing wrong with that!
ZZZ
O... okay then, Tomioka-san...
...I'm going to go home now...

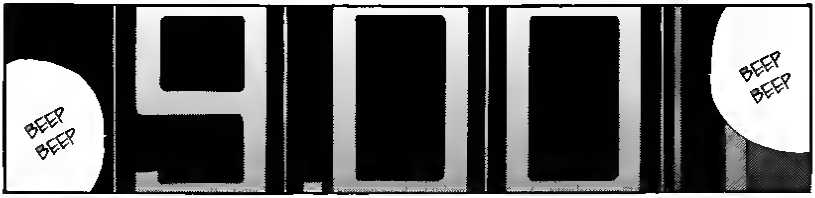
!!!
GACHA
HEY, WHAT? THE DOOR'S NOT LOCKED?
AHHH!!
HELLOOO...? BRO, YOU STILL AROUND?


NO, I'M NOT! I'M HIS NEIGHBOR! I SHOULD BE ASKING WHAT YOU'RE DOING HERE!
WHAT!? WHO ARE YOU? YOU'RE NOT A CAT BURGLER ARE YOU!?
DON'T CAUSE ANYMORE PROBLEMS FOR HIM! JUST LEAVE HIM ALONE!
WHY'D YOU COME BACK HERE!? HE BOUGHT YOUR DAMN LIFE...
SO... I CAME BACK FOR A BIT...
NO, THAT'S NOT WHAT I WAS... I JUST THOUGHT, I REALLY SHOULD... DO SOMETHING TO MAKE IT UP TO HIM...

...AND IT SEEMED LIKE HE WAS... REALLY BACKED UP TOO...
I MEAN... WELL, HE'S A HOMO, RIGHT...? ...HE KEPT GOING ON ABOUT HOW HE WANTED A BOYFRIEND BY THIS YEAR...
MAKE IT UP TO HIM!? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? HOW!?
WELL... UHM...
T... TOMIOKA-SAN...
IS A HOMO-SEXUAL...?
I THOUGHT I'D JUST BE AN OUTLET FOR HIS URGES... YOU GET WHAT I MEAN?
THE ONLY WAY I CAN REALLY PAY HIM BACK... IS WITH MY BODY, SO...
FORGET ABOUT IT, THERE'S NO WAY THAT'D HAPPEN.
HUH? ...WHAT? NO WAY... DID YOU FALL FOR HIM OR SOME-THING?

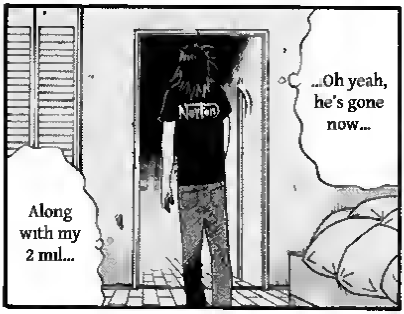
I'M IN A REAL JAM HERE! IF I DON'T GET SOMEWHERE FAR AWAY, THEY'RE GOING TO USE A CHAINSAW AND CHOP ME INTO CHUNKS!
I'M GETTING COLD FEET HERE, IT'S JUST TOO SCARY! HOW ABOUT YOU? CAN YOU LEND ME 10,000 YEN?
UH.. SO YEAH, I WAS GONNA TRY TO TALK HIM INTO GIVING ME 10,000 YEN PER SHOT, BUT...

BEEP BEEP
BEEP BEEP


9.00
BEEP BEEP
BEEP BEEP

CLICK

YAA-
AAWN


Along with my 2 ml...
...Oh yeah, he's gone now...

HRM...

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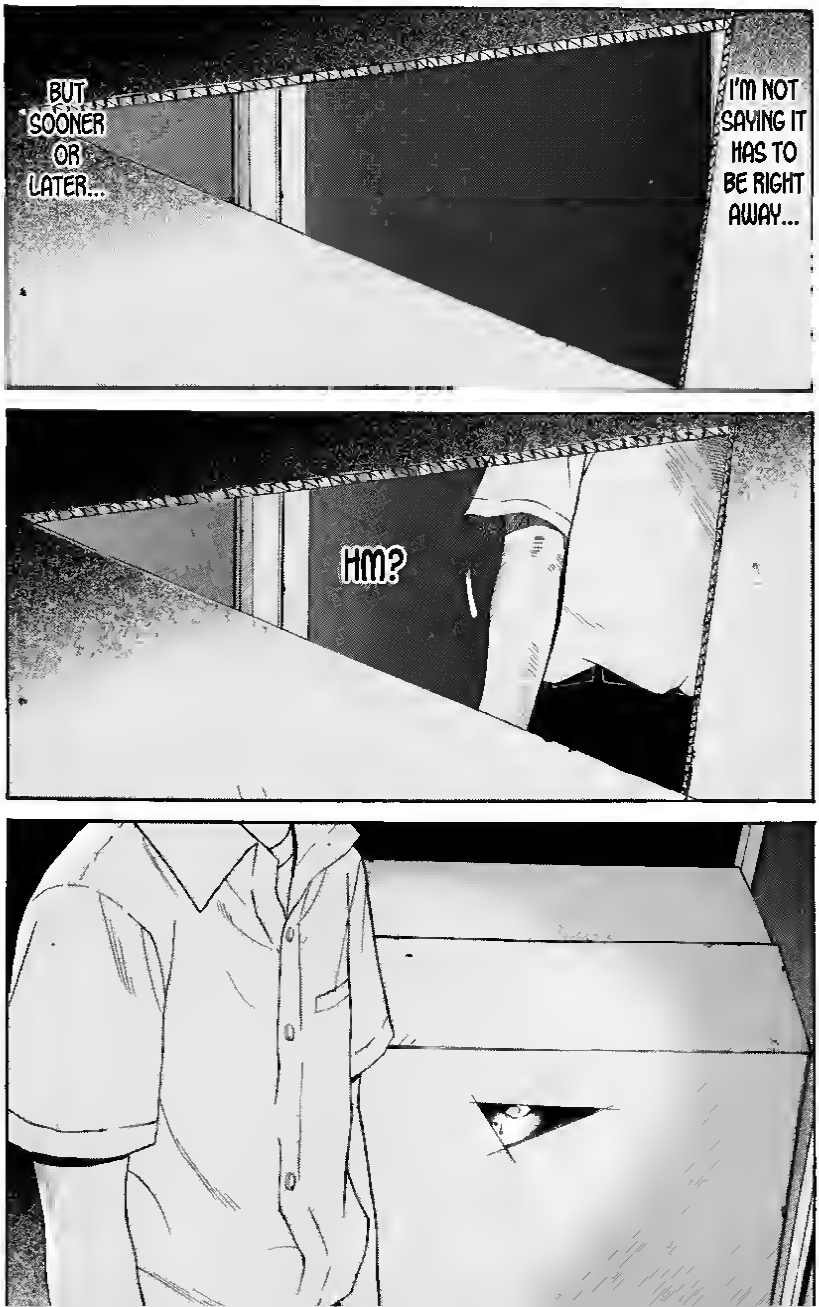
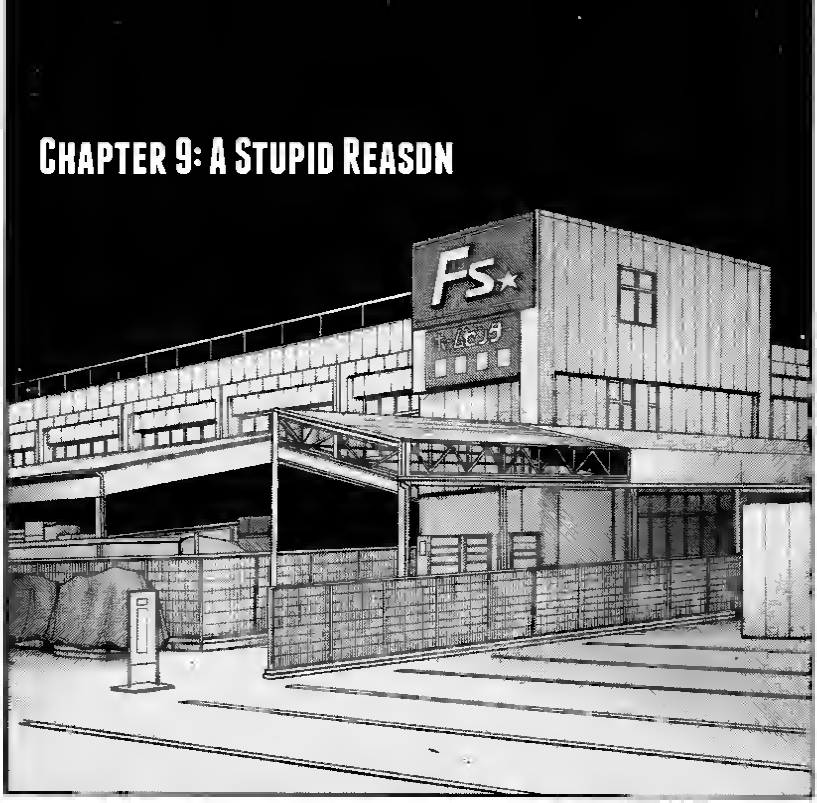
生鮮市場

...Did I do the right thing yesterday?
Or was it the wrong thing?
If I had my 2mil... I could buy a huge TV...
I'd even be able to buy a car...
I saved someone's life yesterday, y'know!
No... I did the right thing... Even if he was really good for nothing, he's still human... Hey, God, you saw what I did there, right?
make something nice happen for me too...!
I did a good deed... So, you gotta...
So I'm definitely gonna expect to get something back for this, get it?
I'm a pretty lowly person...

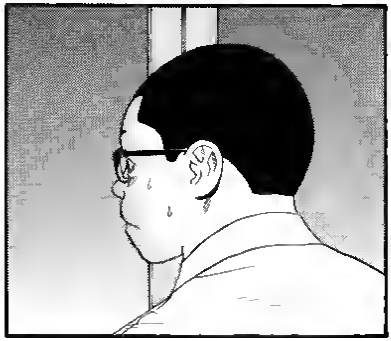

BUT SOONER OR LATER...
I'M NOT SAYING IT HAS TO BE RIGHT AWAY...
HM?

Chapter 9: A Stupid Reasdn



FWIP
RUSTLE
SLIP
SLIP

SHOCK
HEY!!



SO... IT WAS YOU...?
WITH... THE LET-TERS...?

...YEAH.

...WHAT THE HELL WERE YOU TRYING TO DO...?
...WHAT WERE THOSE ABOUT...?

...UH... DIE...?
...I THOUGHT THAT MAYBE YOU'D...

I AIN'T GONNA DIE!
...I
MAYBE YOU'D QUIT WORKING HERE...
W...WELL, EVEN IF YOU DIDN'T DIE... I THOUGHT...

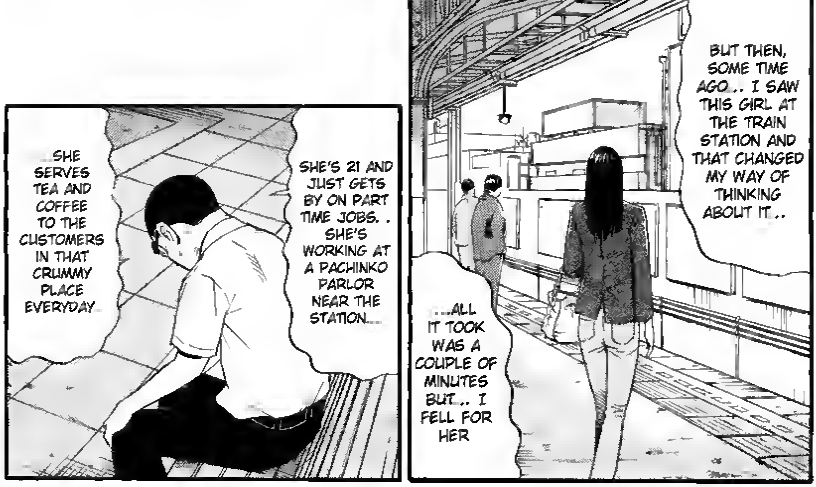
SO... YOU'RE NOT GOING TO DIE...
...AND YOU'RE NOT GOING TO QUIT?
I... I AIN'T QUITTIN' EITHER...
I AIN'T GONNA DIE
AND I AIN'T GONNA QUIT!
H-HEY!! DON'T RUN!!
AHHH!!

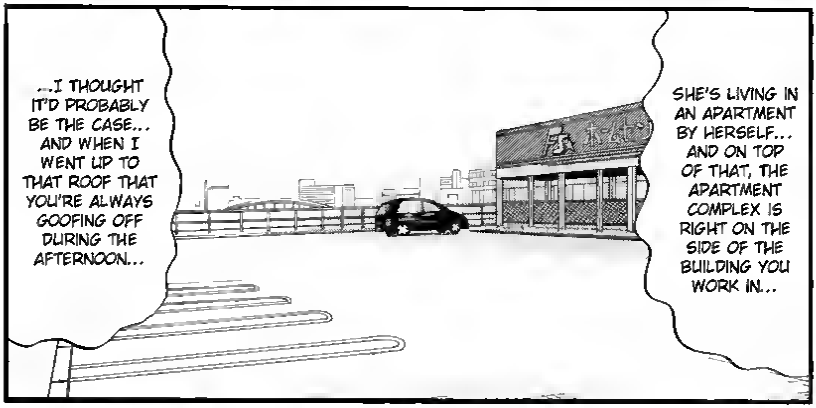
WHAT THE HELL WERE YOU TRYIN' TO PULL!!?
HEY! STOP, YOU ASS-HOLE!
WHAT DID YOU HAVE AGAINST ME TO DO ALL THAT TO ME!?
STOP! I'VE BEEN TRAINING MYSELF FOR THIS!!
GOT-CHA-AAA-AAA!
URG-HK!

HEY, YOU PUNK! WHAT'S YOUR NAME!? WHERE DO YOU GO TO SCHOOL!? WHO ARE YOUR PARENTS!? SPILL IT ALL!!
U-GAH!!
THERE! CAUGHT YA!!
WHUMP
HAA HAA
I'M JUST TRYING TO GET A JOB, THAT'S ALL!!
SO WHAT ABOUT IT!!?
HAA HAA
I- I'M GOING TO GRADUATE FROM HIGH-SCHOOL SOON!!
YOU STUPID MORON, YOU'RE JOKING, RIGHT!?
OH, YOU BASTARD! DID YOU REALLY JUST SAY THAT MY JOB IS AMAZINGLY EASY!?
YOU GET TO BE BY YOURSELF, AND IT'S SO AMAZINGLY EASY!!
HAA HAA
I- I'VE WANTED TO WORK AS THE SECURITY GUARD OVER THERE FOR A LONG TIME NOW!

LET ME CLUE YOU IN ON SOMETHING, MY JOB IS SUPER HARD! I'VE GOT BIG RESPONSI-BILITIES AND THERE'S TONS OF DANGER TO IT!!
MY NIGHTS AND DAYS ARE ALL OUT OF SYNC AND I DON'T GET ENOUGH VITAMIN D EITHER! IT'S NOT AS EASY AS YOU THINK IT IS!!
Y-YOU LIAR! I ALWAYS SEE YOU ON THE ROOF DRINKING COFFEE!!
YOU'RE JUST WORKING OUT AND STUFF. YOU'VE CLEARLY GOT ALL THE FREE TIME IN THE WORLD!!
D-DUMBASS! I WAS TRAINING! I CONSTANTLY HAVE TO MAKE SURE I'M IN PHYSICAL SHAPE TO FIGHT WITH ANYONE THAT SEEMS SUSPICIOUS!!
YOU'RE LYING AGAIN! THERE WAS A TIME WHERE YOU WERE GETTING REALLY INTO STUDYING ITALIAN AND YOU WEREN'T DOING IT AT ALL!
YOU SICK CREEP. WHERE THE HELL WERE YOU WATCHING ME FROM!? YOU'RE DISGUSTING, MAN!
HEY, GET OFF OF ME ALREADY! MY SIDES HURT!

HEY... HURRY UP AND SPIT OUT YOUR NAME ALREADY...
I'LL TELL YOU RIGHT NOW, I'M NOT GOING TO LET YOU GO UNTIL YOU GIVE IT UP.
...I'M... SERIOUS ABOUT THIS... I CAN'T HOLD BACK THESE FEELINGS ANYMORE..
I WANT TO GET THAT JOB... NO MATTER WHAT...
...WHY? ...WHY ARE YOU SO FIXATED ON IT...?
..YOU'RE YOUNG, SO WHY DON'T YOU GET A JOB SOME-WHERE WITH MORE GIRLS OR SOME-THING...
...THE PLACE YOU WORK FOR DOESN'T HAVE A CONTRACT WITH A SECURITY COMPANY... SO THERE'S NEVER A CHANGE IN GUARDS...
...WHICH MEANS THAT YOU'D BE THERE FOR A WHILE.
...BUT I FIGURED IF YOU WERE GONE AT SOME POINT... IF YOU QUIT... THEN I'D TAKE OVER..
I WAS WILLING TO BE PRETTY PATIENT ABOUT THAT...


BUT THEN, SOME TIME AGO... I SAW THIS GIRL AT THE TRAIN STATION AND THAT CHANGED MY WAY OF THINKING ABOUT IT...
...ALL IT TOOK WAS A COUPLE OF MINUTES BUT... I FELL FOR HER
SHE'S 21 AND JUST GETS BY ON PART TIME JOBS.. SHE'S WORKING AT A PACHINKO PARLOR NEAR THE STATION...
...SHE SERVES TEA AND COFFEE TO THE CUSTOMERS IN THAT CRUMMY PLACE EVERYDAY...

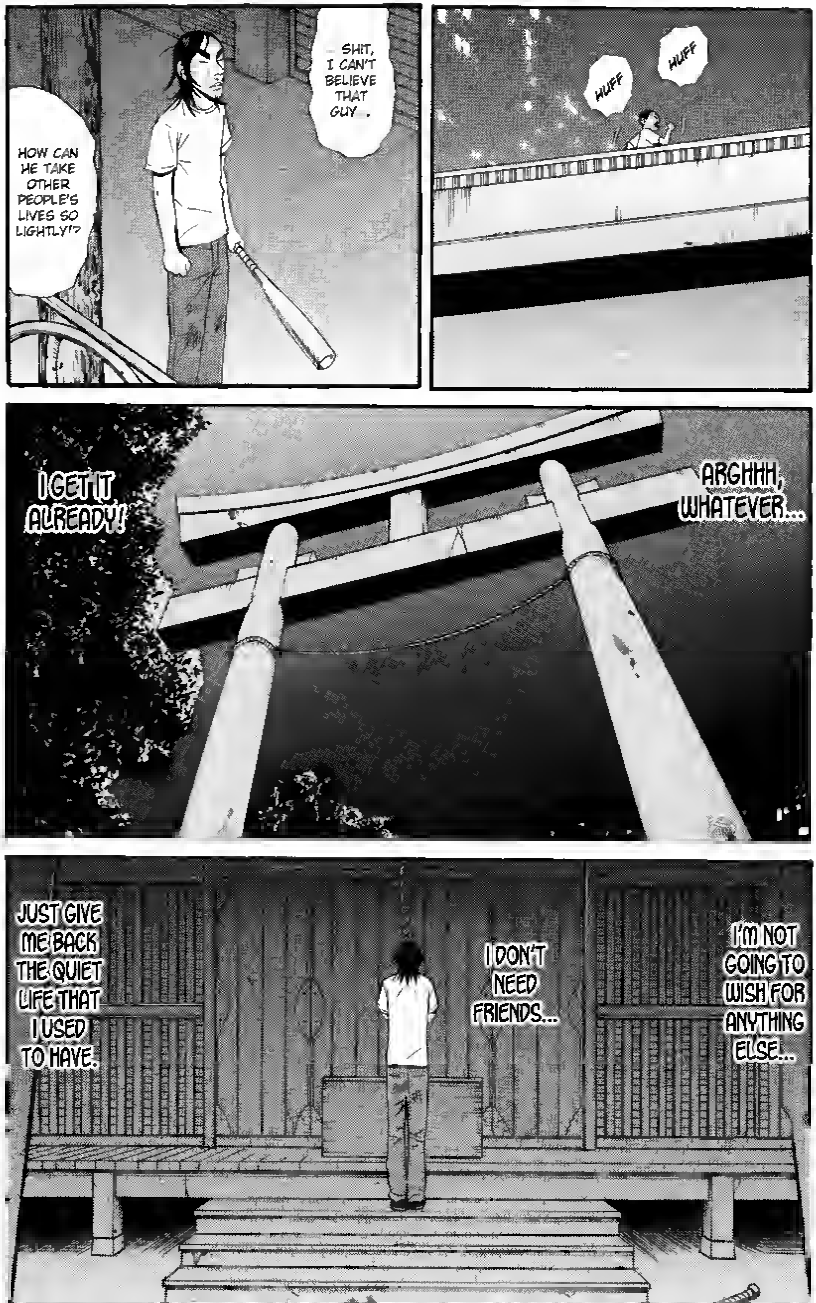

SHE'S LIVING IN AN APARTMENT BY HERSELF... AND ON TOP OF THAT, THE APARTMENT COMPLEX IS RIGHT ON THE SIDE OF THE BUILDING YOU WORK IN...
...I THOUGHT IT'D PROBABLY BE THE CASE... AND WHEN I WENT UP TO THAT ROOF THAT YOU'RE ALWAYS GOOFING OFF DURING THE AFTERNOON...

YOU COULD SEE IT ALL, HUH...?
YOU COULD SEE HER ENTIRE ROOM...
...AND THAT REALLY CAUSED ME TO, UH... GET IMPATIENT ABOUT THINGS...

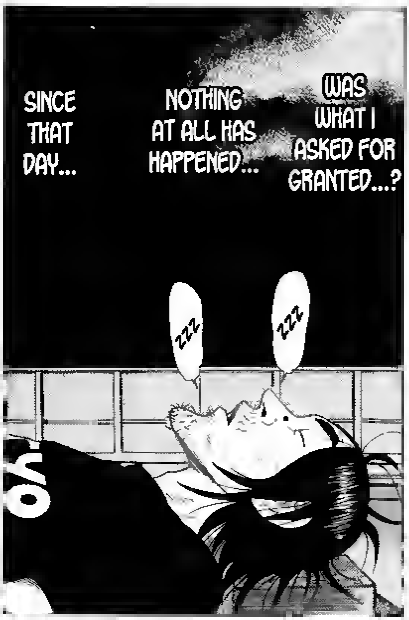
SO YOU WERE THINKING AS LONG AS THINGS WENT GOOD FOR YOU, IT'D BE FINE FOR ME TO DIE!!?
SO WHAT!? THIS IS ALL BECAUSE YOU'RE HARD UP TO GET A PEEP ON HER? THIS IS FOR A SHITTY REASON LIKE THAT!?

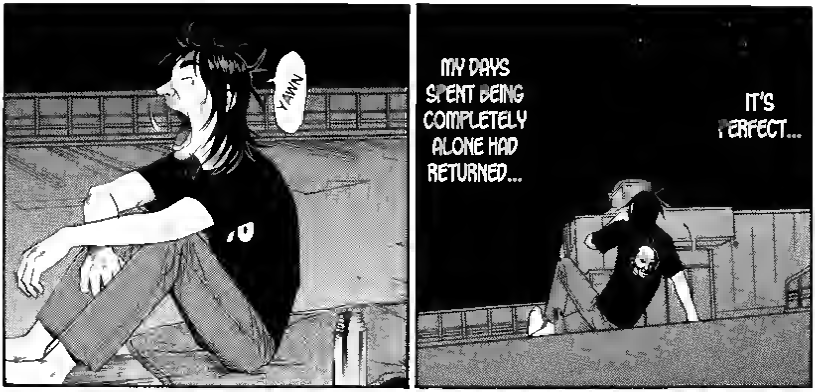
AHHH!!

WHAT!? NO WAY!!!
AHH! IT'S ON FIRE!! THERE'S SMOKE COMING FROM THE SHOP!!

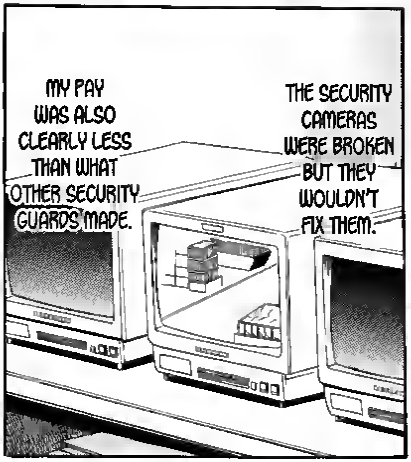

HOW CAN HE TAKE OTHER PEOPLE'S LIVES SO LIGHTLY!?
...SHIT, I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT GUY...
HUFF
HUFF
I GET IT ALREADY!
ARGHHH, WHATEVER...
JUST GIVE ME BACK THE QUIET LIFE THAT I USED TO HAVE.
I DON'T NEED FRIENDS...
I'M NOT GOING TO WISH FOR ANYTHING ELSE...

FOUR DAYS PASSED
SINCE I MADE THAT REQUEST.


SINCE THAT DAY...
NOTHING AT ALL HAS HAPPENED...
WAS WHAT I ASKED FOR GRANTED...?
ZZZ
ZZZ


YAWN
MY DAYS SPENT BEING COMPLETELY ALONE HAD RETURNED...
IT'S PERFECT...

SOMETHING BIG HAD HAPPENED UNDER WHERE I WAS SITTING.
EARLIER THAT AFTERNOON
...HOWEVER, MY WISH WASN'T ACTUALLY GRANTED.

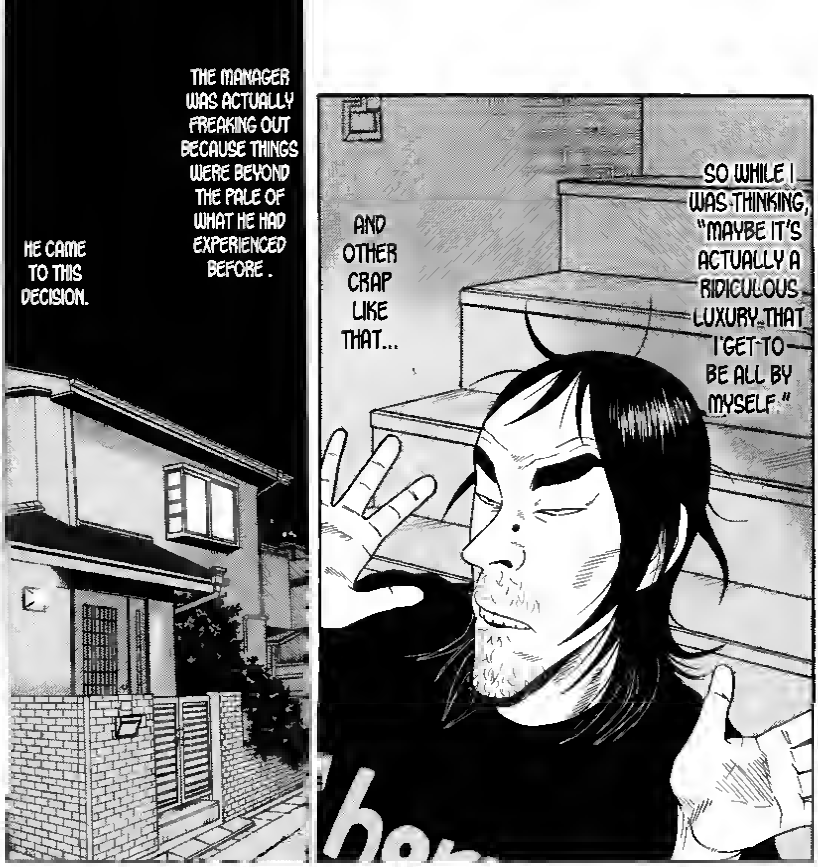

MY PAY WAS ALSO CLEARLY LESS THAN WHAT OTHER SECURITY GUARDS MADE.
THE SECURITY CAMERAS WERE BROKEN BUT THEY WOULDN'T FIX THEM.

THERE'D BE A PERIOD OF TWO DAYS WITH AN IRREGULAR ROTATION BETWEEN THE REGULAR STAFF.
I WAS THE MAIN NIGHTWATCH FOR THIS STORE AND AFTER EVERY STRAIGHT WEEK I WOULD WORK,

IN OTHER WORDS, THE MANAGER WAS A CHEAPSKATE.
AND NOT JUST A REGULAR CHEAPSKATE, HE WAS AN ULTRA CHEAPSKATE.
HE FANCIED HIMSELF A COSTCUTTER, BUT THAT REALLY WASN'T WHAT IT WAS AT ALL.
TURN OFF THE LIGHTS OVER THERE

EARLIER THAT DAY,
A COUP HAD BEEN LAUNCHED AGAINST THAT MANAGER!!

THEY TOLD HIM, "HEY, TAKE YOUR STINGY ASS AND GO SIGN A CONTRACT WITH A SECURITY COMPANY OR GET SOME MORE SECURITY GUARDS!!"
THAT'S RIGHT... THE MALE EMPLOYEES WHO WERE BEING FORCED TO DO NIGHT WATCH DUTY DURING THOSE TWO DAY PERIODS AND THEIR FAMILIES COMPLAINED.


THE MANAGER WAS ACTUALLY FREAKING OUT BECAUSE THINGS WERE BEYOND THE PALE OF WHAT HE HAD EXPERIENCED BEFORE.
HE CAME TO THIS DECISION.
SO WHILE I WAS THINKING, "MAYBE IT'S ACTUALLY A RIDICULOUS LUXURY THAT I GET TO BE ALL BY MYSELF."
AND OTHER CRAP LIKE THAT...

I GUESS I SHOULD HIRE TWO MORE IDIOTS THAT WON'T MAKE ANY TROUBLE
TO ACT AS SECURITY GUARDS...

Chapter 10: The Newcomers

THEY'LL BE HERE SOON...
THEY'RE COMING...
FS☆
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WILL BE HERE SOON.
TWO COMPLETE STRANGERS
BUSTING INTO THE MIDDLE OF MY LIFE...
BATTERING DOWN THE GATES TO MY FORTRESS OF FREEDOM...
NO MATTER HOW STORMY THE WEATHER MIGHT BE ON THE OUTSIDE, I GOTTA REMAIN COOL AND COLLECTED ON THE INSIDE.
I NEED TO BE IN COMPLETE CONTROL...
PHEW, I NEED TO CALM DOWN...

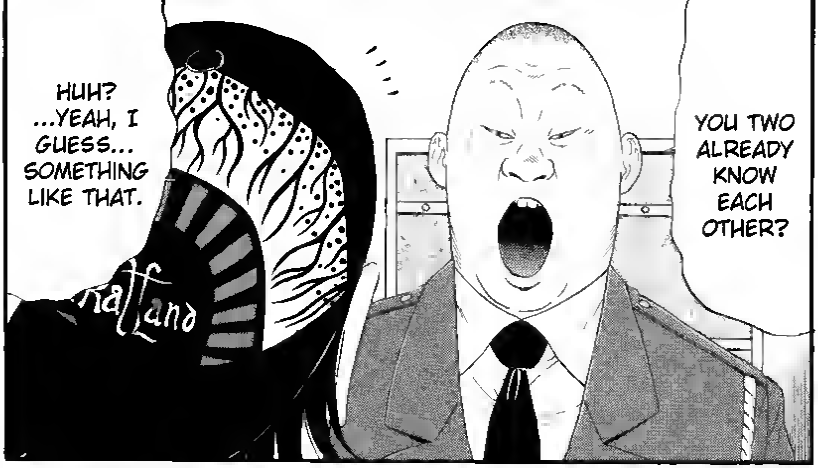
THEY'RE THE ONES THAT SHOULD BE SCARED!
WHAT AM I EVEN GETTIN' SCARED FOR ANYWAYS!?
I'M GONNA MAKE THEM QUAKE IN THEIR BOOTS LIKE PERRY DID EDO WHEN HE SHOWED UP IN THOSE HUGE BLACK SHIPS!!
FIRST IMPRESSIONS ARE VITAL...
I'll beat you the hell up!!
I'm the leader around here, got it!? Go ahead, bitch and whine all you want...
You'll get a fist to the temple!!
CRICK CRICK
Just try and mouth off to me!

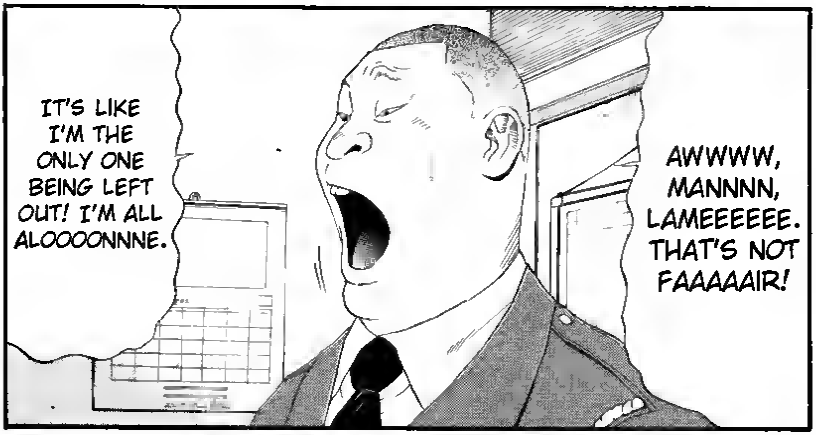
KNOCK KNOCK
HUH!!?
HEY, TOMIOKA-KUN.. I BROUGHT THE NEW GUYS OVER.
...C... COME ON INNNN...
TAKE OFF YOUR CAPS AND SAY HELLO...
OKAY, COME ON IN.. TOMIOKA-SAN HERE IS IN CHARGE OF YOU GUYS..
YEAH.. I'LL DO MY BEST.
WELL, I'M SURE THIS IS A LOAD ON YOU.. BUT SHOW THEM THE ROPES, WON'T YOU..?

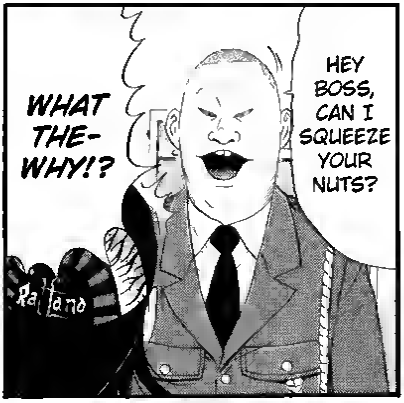
...'CUSE ME.
EXCUSE MEEEEE!
ギッ

WHAT!?
S... SORRY...
ABOUT LAST TIME...
S... SORRY? ARE YOU... SERIOUS RIGHT NOW!?
HOW CAN YOU EVEN SHOW YOUR FACE AROUND HERE!?
MY NAME IS HANABAYASHI YUUDAI, NICE TO MEETCHA-AAAAA!
UH... I'M AMEKAWA ISAMU... NICE TO MEET YOU...

YEAH, FOR SURE.. TOMIOKA-KUN'S MOVING UP ON THE LADDER TOO. THAT'LL BE GOOD FOR HIM
WELL, THIS SHOULD MAKE THINGS A LOT EASIER.
OH... OKAY... THANKS FOR EVERYTHING.
I GAVE THEM THE MANUAL AND WENT THROUGH THE BASICS SO YOU HANDLE THE FINER POINTS OF BEING ON THE JOB, GOT IT?
I'M NOT SURE WHAT I WAS REALLY DOING THEN... I MUST'VE BEEN IN A FUGUE STATE OR SOME-THING—
.. I WOULD UH... FIRST LIKE TO SINCERELY APOLOGIZE FOR WHAT HAPPENED BACK THEN.
...WHAT?
...UH... UHRMM...
...OKAY ALREADY... I GET IT... LIVING THE LIFE NOW WITH YOUR DREAM JOB, HUH...?
...I'M SORRY... PLEASE FORGIVE ME...


YOU TWO ALREADY KNOW EACH OTHER?
HUH? ...YEAH, I GUESS... SOMETHING LIKE THAT.


AWWWW, MANNNN, LAMEEEEEE. THAT'S NOT FAAAAAIR!
IT'S LIKE I'M THE ONLY ONE BEING LEFT OUT! I'M ALL ALOOOONNNE.


HEY BOSS, CAN I SQUEEZE YOUR NUTS?
WHAT THE- WHY!?

I WANNA GET ALONG WITH EVERYONE RIGHT AWAY!
WE SHOULD ALL START RUBBIN' EACH OTHER'S JUNK!

UH.. SO PEOPLE WHO GRAB EACH OTHER'S DICKS GET ALONG TOGETHER?
YEAH! IT'S AMAZING! I DISCOVERED THIS WHEN I WAS IN 8TH GRADE! IT'S, LIKE, THE ULTIMATE TECHNIQUE FOR THIS!
I...I DON'T WANNA DO THAT...
...NO WAY...
OH, DON'T SAY THAT! IT'S POINTLESS UNLESS EVERYONE DOES IT SO LET'S DO IT
JUST TRUST ME AND GIVE IT A SHOT.
NO THAT'S STUPID... I'M NOT GOING TO DO THAT..
Y'KNOW, THE MORE OF A STICKLER YOU ARE ABOUT IT, THE BETTER IT WORKS! C'MON, HOW 'BOUT YOU LET ME COP A FEEL?
I SAID NO!! STOP THAT, YOU DUMBASS!!
...
W.. WHAT'S WITH YOU? THERE'S NOTHING TO GET MAD ABOUT!
WE JUST MET AND YOU'RE ALREADY CALLING ME A DUMB-ASS ..
I THINK IT'S MORE SUSPECT TO BE ASKING PEOPLE YOU JUST MET TO LET YOU GRAB THEIR NUTS
WHAT? F'REAL!!?

AWWWW, MAN... I GOT A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS NOW.
I DON'T KNOW IF I'M GONNA BE ABLE TO FIT IN HERE ..
Uh, it's not really a big deal if you don't...
HEY... CAN I GO TAKE A LOOK YET...
UP THERE...?
WHAT THE HELL!? YOUR FIRST DAMN DAY ON THE JOB AND IT'S JUST STRAIGHT TO PEEPING!?
HUH? WHAT? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? PEEPING?
AMEKAWA-KUN OVER HERE ONLY GOT A JOB AT THIS PLACE SO HE COULD PEEP INTO THE ROOM OF THE GIRL HE LIKES.
AND HE EVEN TRIED TO KILL ME TO ACCOMPLISH THAT!
YOU BETTER WATCH OUT, HANABAYASHI-KUN. THIS GUY IS DANGEROUS, WHO KNOWS WHAT LENGTH HE'LL GO TO!
REAAAAAALLY? HE'S A LOT SCARIER THAN HE LOOKS, HUH? HE SORTA LOOKS LIKE A WOMBAT TO ME.
I'M BEGGING YOU HERE... CAN I GO?

THIS IS THE END OF THE WORLD FOR ME! PLEASE! COME ON! YOU CAN LET ME GO TAKE A LOOK, RIGHT!?
TODAY I SAW SOME-THING BIG! I SAW HER BRINGING A GUY BACK TO HER HOME FOR THE FIRST TIME!!

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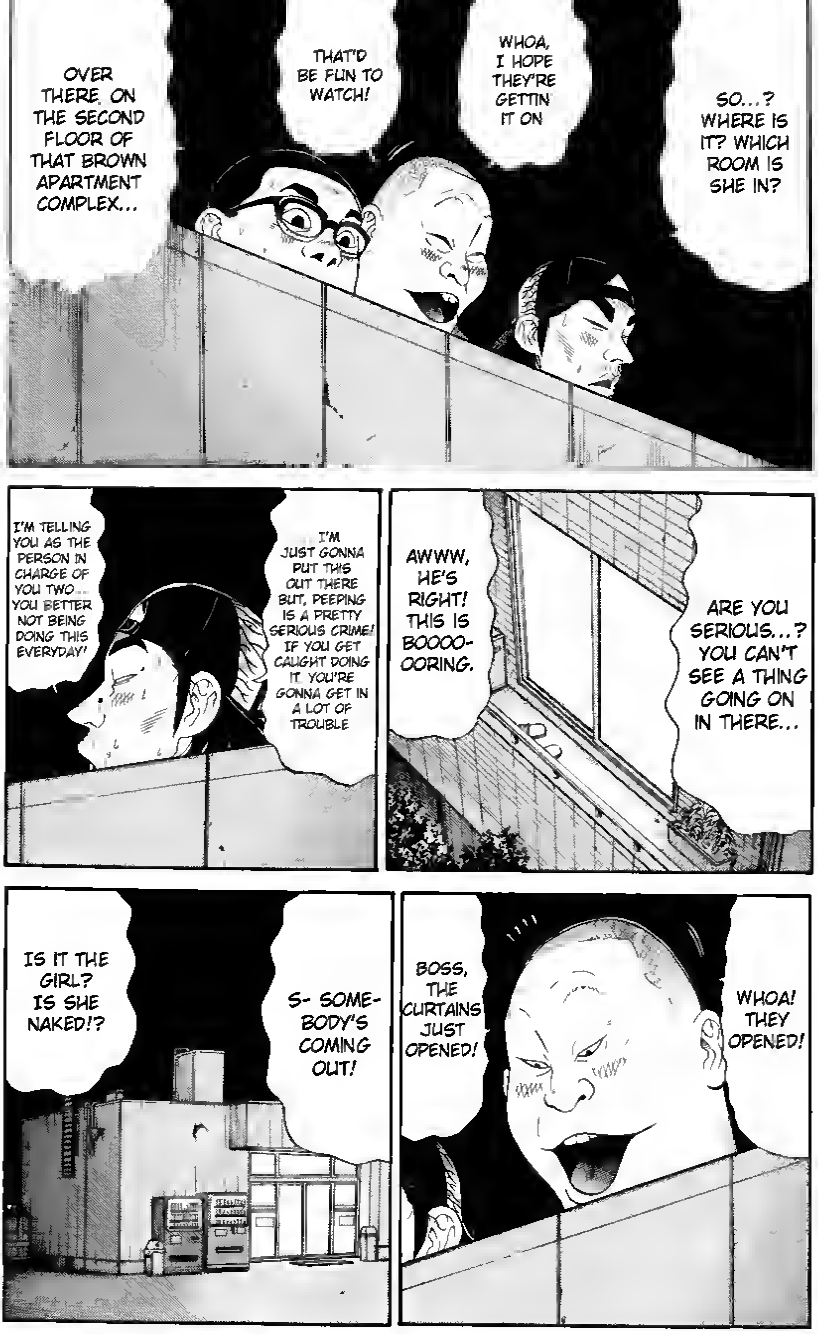
D-DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT...
W-WHAT!? WHY DID EVERYONE ELSE COME UP HERE!?


SO...? WHERE IS IT? WHICH ROOM IS SHE IN?
WHOA, I HOPE THEY'RE GETTIN IT ON
THAT'D BE FUN TO WATCH!
OVER THERE, ON THE SECOND FLOOR OF THAT BROWN APARTMENT COMPLEX...
ARE YOU SERIOUS...? YOU CAN'T SEE A THING GOING ON IN THERE...
AWWW, HE'S RIGHT! THIS IS BOOOO-OORING.
I'M JUST GONNA PUT THIS OUT THERE BUT, PEEPING IS A PRETTY SERIOUS CRIME! IF YOU GET CAUGHT DOING IT, YOU'RE GONNA GET IN A LOT OF TROUBLE
I'M TELLING YOU AS THE PERSON IN CHARGE OF YOU TWO... YOU BETTER NOT BEING DOING THIS EVERYDAY!
WHOA! THEY OPENED!
BOSS, THE CURTAINS JUST OPENED!
S- SOME-BODY'S COMING OUT!
IS IT THE GIRL? IS SHE NAKED!?

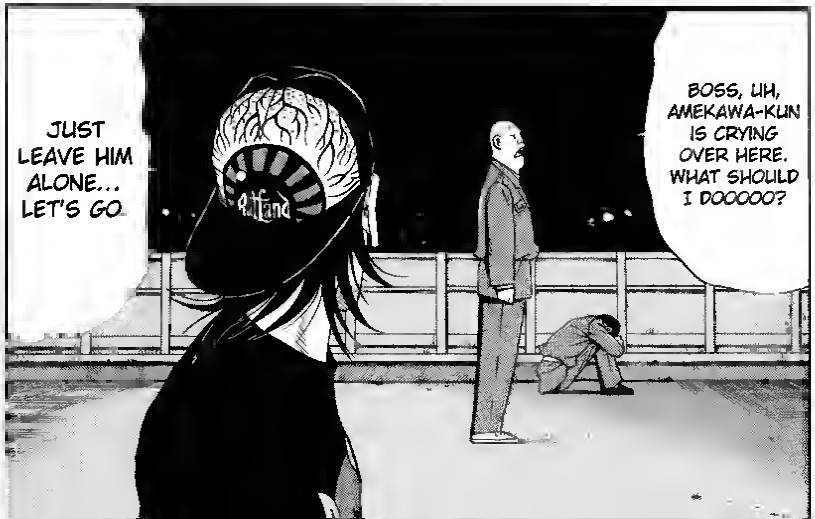
AH...
THAT GUY... IS FROM THE PACHINKO PARLOR..

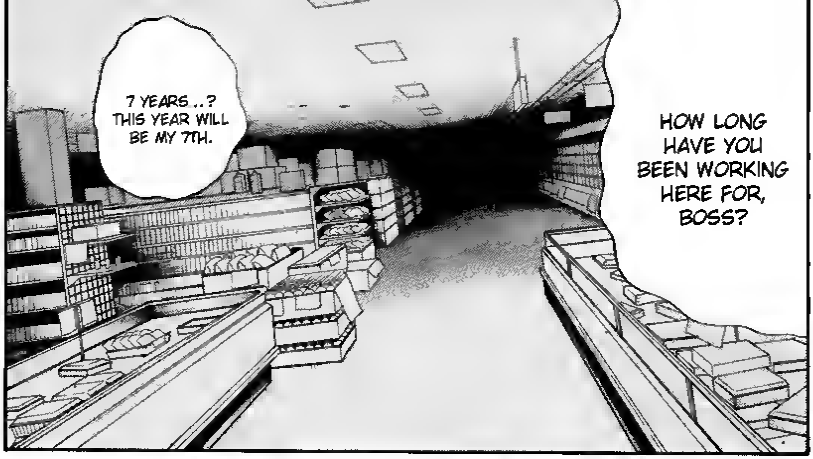
HEY, IT'S A GIRL! LOOK!
THERE'S A GIRL BEHIND HIM!

HUH?
S... SHE'S NOT AN OLD LADY...
GAWD, WHY'D I HAVE TO SEE SOMETHING LIKE THIS ON MY FIRST DAY!?
UGHHHH! THAT LOOKS LIKE SOMEBODY'S MOM! AN OLD LADY POPPED OUT!
WHAT'S SO GOOD ABOUT HER!? I MEAN, SHE LOOKS LIKE SHE'S A DRUGGIE OR SOMETHING!
W-WHAT? DO YOU HAVE YOUR HEAD SCREWED ON RIGHT!? MAYBE IT'S TIME TO GET A NEW PAIR OF GLASSES?
THAT PERSON... IS THE GIRL THAT I LIKE...
I DON'T CARE... I CAN'T HELP IT... IT'S JUST WHAT I LIKE...
... WHEN A WEAK PERSON CLINGS TO ANOTHER WEAK PERSON, ALL IT DOES IS MAKE THEM EVEN MORE WEAK... ARE YOU SURE THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT?
I... LIKE GIRLS THAT LOOK WEAK AND DELICATE LIKE HER...

YOU CAN'T HELP IT...? AND TAKE A LOOK AT THAT TATTOO THAT GUY'S GOT. HE DIDN'T JUST GET THAT TO LOOK COOL, GET IT?
THAT LOOKS COMPLETELY PROFESSIONAL, YOU KNOW? FOR SOMEONE THAT'S A PROFESSIONAL!

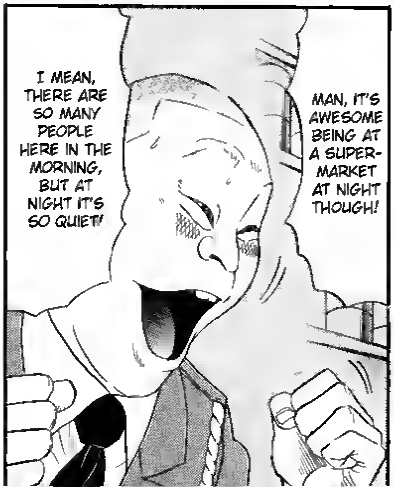
JUST FORGET ABOUT IT... NOTHING GOOD IS GONNA COME FROM FALLING FOR A GIRL LIKE HER!
YOU'VE SEEN ENOUGH, RIGHT? C'MON, LET'S GO...
HE SAID WE'RE GOING.
SIGH...


BOSS, UH, AMEKAWA-KUN IS CRYING OVER HERE. WHAT SHOULD I DOOOOO?
JUST LEAVE HIM ALONE... LET'S GO.


HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING HERE FOR, BOSS?
7 YEARS..? THIS YEAR WILL BE MY 7TH.

AHHHH, AWESOME! HEARING YOU SAY THAT IS A HUGE LOAD OFF MY BACK.
I CAN'T HANDLE THAT SORTA STUFF AT ALL! IT FREAKS ME OUT SO BAD!

REALLY? THEN LIKE, HAVE YOU SEEN ANY GHOSTS OR ANYTHING BEFORE?
NO. THOSE THINGS DON'T EXIST.

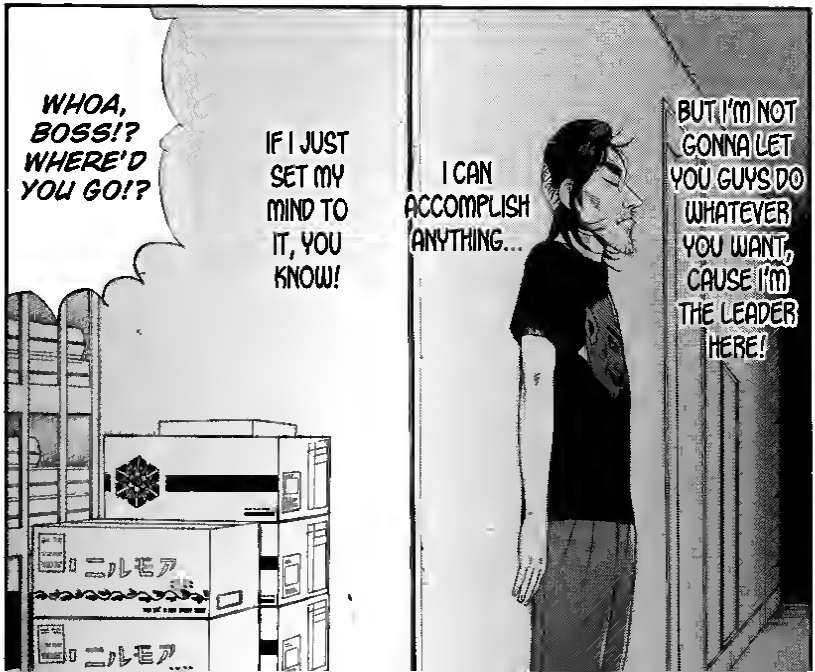

MAN, IT'S AWESOME BEING AT A SUPER-MARKET AT NIGHT THOUGH!
I MEAN, THERE ARE SO MANY PEOPLE HERE IN THE MORNING, BUT AT NIGHT IT'S SO QUIET!

THEN WHY'D YOU CHOOSE THIS KIND OF WORK?
I'M NOT REALLY SURE ABOUT IT MYSELF! I GET REALLY SCARED ABOUT THAT STUFF, BUT I'M ALSO SUPER CURIOUS ABOUT IT!

I STILL CAN'T GET OVER HOW DIFFERENT IT IS!
OH, MAN! IS IT OKAY IF I LIKE SHOUT OUT SOME WORDS THAT I'D NEVER BE ALLOWED TO SAY DURING THE DAY!?
UH . I GUESS. . JUST A COUPLE...
PUSSY-YYYYY-YYYYY-YYYYY-YYY!!
PENIS-SSSS-SSSS-SSSS-SSS!!
SHIT, SHIT, SHIT-TTTT-TTTT-TTT!!
PUSSY HAIR!!

NO! YOU'RE THE ONE THAT'S WEIRD!!
THAT'S WEIRD...
HUH? THAT DIDN'T FEEL AS GOOD AS I THOUGHT IT WOULD...
THIS FREAKIN SUCKS!!
AGHHH, GOD DAMMIT!!

THIS IS THE GOD DAMN PITS!!
LET'S HAVE A PARTY FOR THE NEW GUYS!
BOSS, CAN WE HAVE A WELCOMING PARTYYYY?
I JUST HAD TO END UP WITH COMPLETE IDIOTS! AND TWO OF THEM AT THAT!


WHOA, BOSS!? WHERE'D YOU GO!?
IF I JUST SET MY MIND TO IT, YOU KNOW!
I CAN ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING...
BUT I'M NOT GONNA LET YOU GUYS DO WHATEVER YOU WANT, CAUSE I'M THE LEADER HERE!
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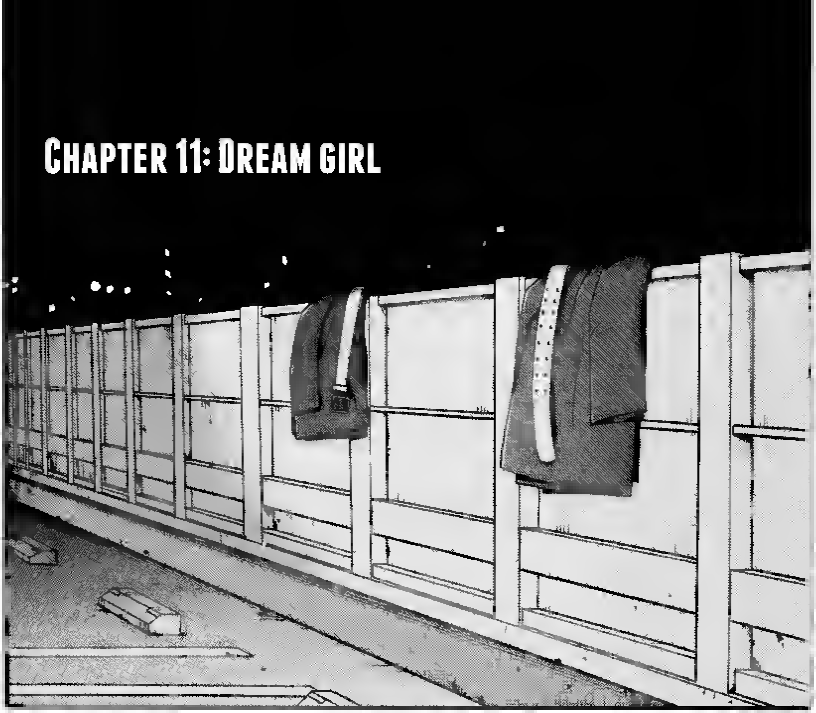
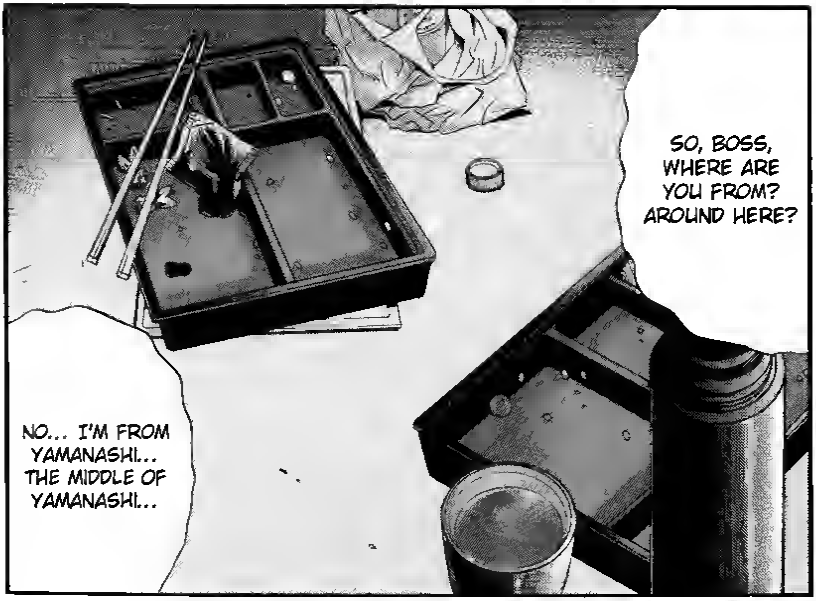
ニルモア

Chapter 11: Dream girl





YEAH... I GUESS..
SO WE'RE BOTH FROM THE COUNTRY-SIDE, HUH!
I'M FROM AOMORI.. THE MIDDLE OF AOMORI
UH... NOT REALLY I DIDN'T REALLY HAVE ANY BIG DREAMS
BUT IT'S LIKE, THE DREAMS THAT YOU HAD THAT WERE BURNING LIKE MAGMA HAVE COMPLETELY COOLED OFF AND BECOME FROZEN LIKE ICE?
DID YOU COME TO TOKYO CHASING SOME BIG DREAM OF YOURS, BOSS?
YOU GOT ANY HOBBIES, BOSS? WHAT DO YOU DO ON YOUR DAYS OFF?
..NOT MUCH.. SLEEP.. OR READ, I GUESS
AND THERE ARE LOADS OF THEM OVER HERE... AND THE PAY IS A LOT BETTER. THOSE ARE PRETTY MUCH ALL THE REASONS
...THERE JUST WEREN'T MANY JOBS AROUND HOME...

AND I DON'T HAVE A GIRLFRIEND WITH THAT IN MIND...
NO... I'VE NEVER EVEN THOUGHT ABOUT MARRIAGE...
OR DO YOU HAVE A GIRLFRIEND THAT YOU'RE PLANNING TO MARRY?
ARE YOU MARRIED ALREADY?
What the hell is with this asshole? ..Does he want to fight or something?
SLUUUURP
W..what's with this guy? ..Is he trying to pick a fight or something?
I DON'T EVEN HAVE A SINGLE FRIEND...
...N... NO...
YOU GOT ANY FRIENDS?
...SO, BOSS...

TO BE HONEST... WELL, I JUST DON'T KNOW.
SO YOU'RE ASKING ME IF I ENJOY MY LIFE...? IS THAT IT?
NOT TOO MUCH DIFFERENT BETWEEN YOU AND THOSE ROCKS OVER THERE! HOW CAN YOU ENJOY A LIFE LIKE THAT!?
LIKE, THAT MEANS YOU DON'T GOT JACK, RIGHT!?
WHAT!? ARE YOU F'REAL!? BUT THAT'S LIKE, SKETCHY AS HELL!!

YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE, YOU FEEL ME!? IF YOU DON'T ENJOY YOURSELF AS MUCH AS YOU CAN THEN YOU'RE MISSIN' OUT YOOOOO!!
AWWWW, MAAAAN! THAT AIN'T GOOD, BOSS! THAT'S A GOD DAMN WASTE!

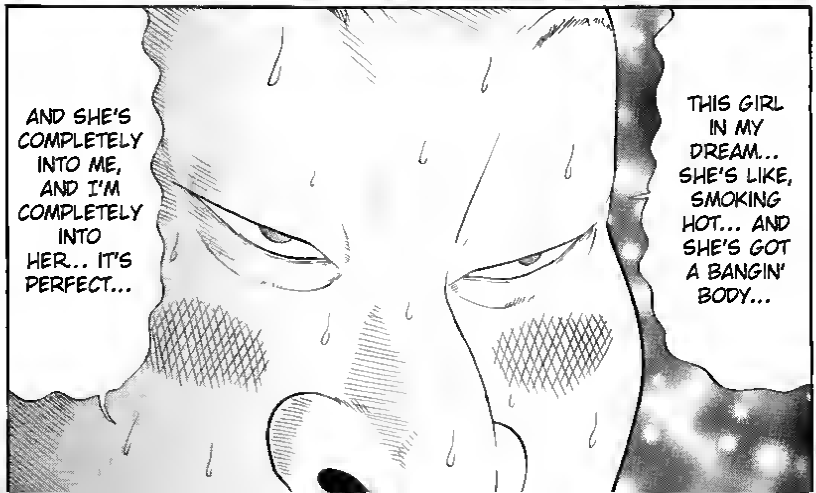
I'M SURE YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF FRIENDS, RIGHT? AND YOU MUST HAVE A GIRLFRIEND, HUH?
Y... YOU'RE THE FIRST PERSON THAT I'VE MET THAT WILL ACTUALLY OUTRIGHT SAY THAT SIMPLE-MINDED KINDA STUFF...

OH, I SEE... SO RIGHT NOW HE GOT A BIT AHEAD OF HIMSELF AND TRIPPED OVER HIS OWN FEET, HUH?
Y- YOU KNOW WHAT I THINK...? I THINK HE WAS TRYING TO COME UP WITH... A NEW IDENTITY FOR HIMSELF SINCE HE'S IN A NEW ENVI-RONMENT...
N-NO! THAT'S NOT IT! I MAY NOT HAVE ANY FRIENDS, BUT I'M COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM YOU, BOSS!
W...WHAT, HANABAYASHI-KUN? ...ARE YOU TELLING ME THAT YOU DON'T HAVE ANY OF THOSE THINGS EITHER?
AND YOU WERE STILL SHOUTING AT ME AND TELLING ME WHAT I SHOULD AND SHOULDN'T DO?
I'VE GOT A BIG ASS DREAM THAT KEEPS MY DAYS SPARKLIN'!!
'CAUSE I'VE GOT A DREAM!!
LET'S HEAR WHAT IT IS THAT MAKES YOUR DAYS SPARKLE
O...OH YEAH? THEN WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S THIS BIG DREAM OF YOURS..
HEY, YOU SHUT YOUR MOUTH! I'M HAVING A DISCUSSION WITH THE BOSS OVER HERE!
HMPH... IT'S PROBABLY JUST SOME STUPID, DUMB KID'S DREAM, AM I RIGHT?

I'M SEARCHIN' FOR THE GIRL OF MY DREAMS.
W... WELL, ACTU- ALLY...
WHAT THE HELL? WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "THE GIRL OF YOUR DREAMS"?
UH... COULD YOU TRY TO EXPLAIN IT IN A WAY THAT WE'D UNDERSTAND..?
WHAT?
HUH?

IT STARTED LAST YEAR AROUND SUMMER... AND I'VE HAD THAT DREAM 18 TIMES ALREADY NOW...
...I'VE... HAD THE SAME DREAM OVER AND OVER... AND THE SAME GIRL APPEARS IN THAT DREAM...

BUT IT'S MOSTLY JUST A NICE REFRESHING DREAM OF GOING ON A DATE TO THE PARK...
UH... WELL, I MEAN, YEAH, THE LATER HALF OF IT IS...
WHAT KIND OF DREAM WAS IT? PROBABLY SOME FULL BLOWN WET DREAM, RIGHT?


AND SHE'S COMPLETELY INTO ME, AND I'M COMPLETELY INTO HER... IT'S PERFECT...
THIS GIRL IN MY DREAM... SHE'S LIKE, SMOKING HOT... AND SHE'S GOT A BANGIN' BODY...

HEY IDIOO-OOOO-OOOO-OOOT, HOW ABOUT YOU LISTEN TO THE REST OF WHAT I HAVE TO SAY!?
LET! ME! FINISH! MY! STORY!!
SO .? WHAT, YOU'VE BEEN WANDERING AROUND THE ENTIRE COUNTRY LOOKING FOR THIS GIRL THAT DOESN'T EXIST?
. . OR MAYBE YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A GOOD HOSPITAL HERE IN TOKYO...?
SO, THEN I SAW HER, BOSS! I WAS AT HOME AND I HAPPENED TO SEE HER WHILE I WAS WATCHING TV!!
PLEASE TAKE A LOOK OVER HERE.
SHE WAS BEHIND THIS ANNOUNCER WHO WAS DOING THIS SHOW ON THE HOMELESS IN TOKYO!
SHE WAS PASSING BY!! THE GIRL OF MY DREAMS WAS WITH HER FRIEND!!
I'M TOTALLY CERTAIN ABOUT IT!! AND SO THAT'S WHY I GOT MY ASS OVER HERE!!

H- HEY! WHAT ARE YOU GETTING IMPRESSED BY THAT FOR!? THERE'S NO WAY SOMETHING LIKE THAT COULD HAPPEN!!
YEAH! YOU'RE EXACTLY RIGHT!! YOU JUST SAID SOMETHING WONDERFUL, BOSS!!
WHOOOAAAA, THAT'S AMAZING... THESE THINGS REALLY DO HAPPEN, HUH...? SHE'S, LIKE, DESTINED TO BE WITH YOU

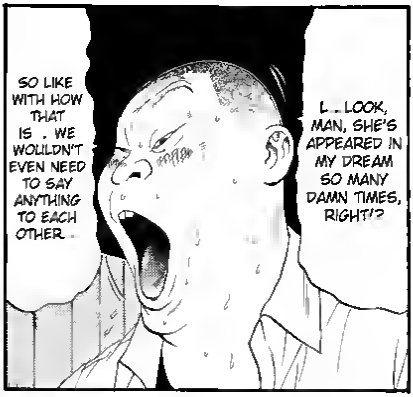
I KNOW THIS GIRL DOWN TO THE MOLE ON THE SIDE OF HER ASS! I AIN'T WRONG ABOUT THIS!!
WHADJA JUST SAY!? YOU TELLIN' ME I GOT THE WRONG PERSON OR SOMETHING!? THERE'S NO FREAKIN' WAY THAT'D HAPPEN!

I'VE READ ABOUT THIS IN A BOOK! HE'S JUST MAKING UP MEMORIES TO SUIT HIS OWN NEEDS!
WHAT THIS GUY IS TRYING TO TELL US RIGHT NOW WITH THIS IS, "HEY, I'M NOT RIGHT IN THE HEAD OVER HERE!"

I'M JUST GONNA DO MY BEST AND LOOK AROUND FOR HER!! I'M GONNA STICK WITH IT EVERY SINGLE DAY USING THE POWER OF L. O. V. E!!
ALL RIGHT, FINE! LET'S SAY THAT SHE EXISTS! LET'S JUST GIVE YOU THAT!! OKAY, THEN, HOW ARE YOU GONNA FIND HER, HUH!?

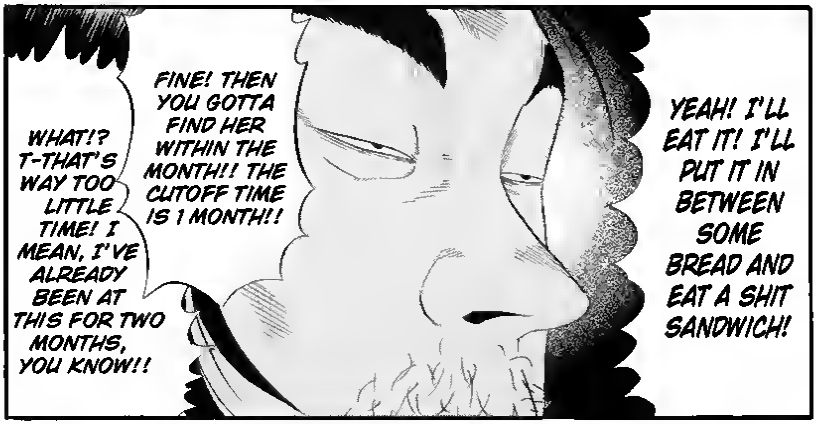
HOW ARE YOU GOING TO EXPLAIN THINGS TO HER THEN!? WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO SAY TO HER!?
ALL RIGHT! I'M FEELING GENEROUS, SO I'LL EVEN GIVE YOU THAT! SO LET'S SAY SHE EXISTS... AND BY SOME CRAZY MIRACLE YOU MEET HER!

NO, COME ON! I'M LIKE TOTALLY SANE! BELIEVE ME!
REALLY?
HEY, DID YOU HEAR THAT!? THIS GUY IS TALKING ABOUT LIKE TELEPATHY AND STUFF!! HE PRETTY MUCH JUST IMPLIED IT!

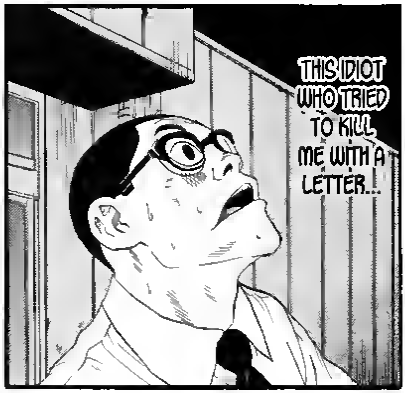

SO LIKE WITH HOW THAT IS . WE WOULDN'T EVEN NEED TO SAY ANYTHING TO EACH OTHER .
L . LOOK, MAN, SHE'S APPEARED IN MY DREAM SO MANY DAMN TIMES, RIGHT!?

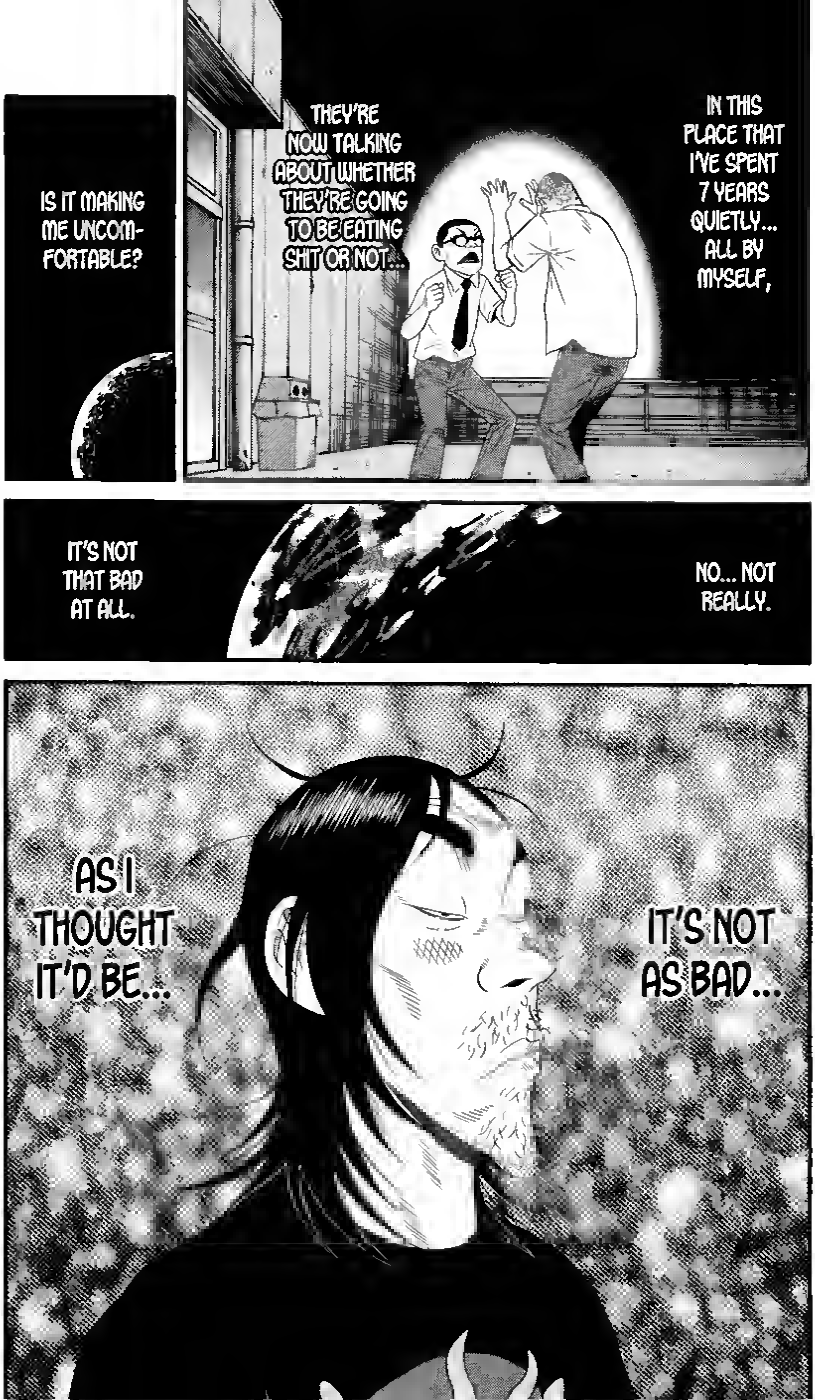
AND NOW I'M REALLY DAMN UNCOM-FORTABLE. I FEEL COMPLETELY UNSAFE BECAUSE I HAVE TO WORK WITH A TOTAL NUTCASE LIKE YOU!!
Y... YOU BETTER LISTEN, AND LISTEN UP GOOD! THAT KIND OF GIRL DOESN'T EXIST IN THIS WORLD!! SO THAT MEANS YOU'LL NEVER FIND HER!!

OKAY, FINE! I'LL PUT IT ON TOP OF A PIPING BOWL OF RICE AND SLURP IT ON DOWN! OF COURSE THAT MEANS IF YOU DON'T FIND HER, THEN YOU GOTTA EAT MY SHIT, RIGHT!?
ALL RIGHT, THEN WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO IF SHE DOES EXIST!? IF SHE DOES, THEN HOW ABOUT YOU EAT MY SHIT! YOU GOTTA EAT MY SHIT RIGHT IN FRONT OF MY FACE!!


WHAT!? T-THAT'S WAY TOO LITTLE TIME! I MEAN, I'VE ALREADY BEEN AT THIS FOR TWO MONTHS, YOU KNOW!!
FINE! THEN YOU GOTTA FIND HER WITHIN THE MONTH!! THE CUTOFF TIME IS 1 MONTH!!
YEAH! I'LL EAT IT! I'LL PUT IT IN BETWEEN SOME BREAD AND EAT A SHIT SANDWICH!

ARE FIGHTING WITH EACH OTHER...
AND THIS CREATURE WITH A HUGE BODY BUT A TINY BRAIN


THIS IDIOT WHO TRIED TO KILL ME WITH A LETTER...


IS IT MAKING ME UNCOM-FORTABLE?
THEY'RE NOW TALKING ABOUT WHETHER THEY'RE GOING TO BE EATING SHIT OR NOT...
IN THIS PLACE THAT I'VE SPENT 7 YEARS QUIETLY... ALL BY MYSELF,
IT'S NOT THAT BAD AT ALL.
NO... NOT REALLY.
AS I THOUGHT IT'D BE...
IT'S NOT AS BAD...

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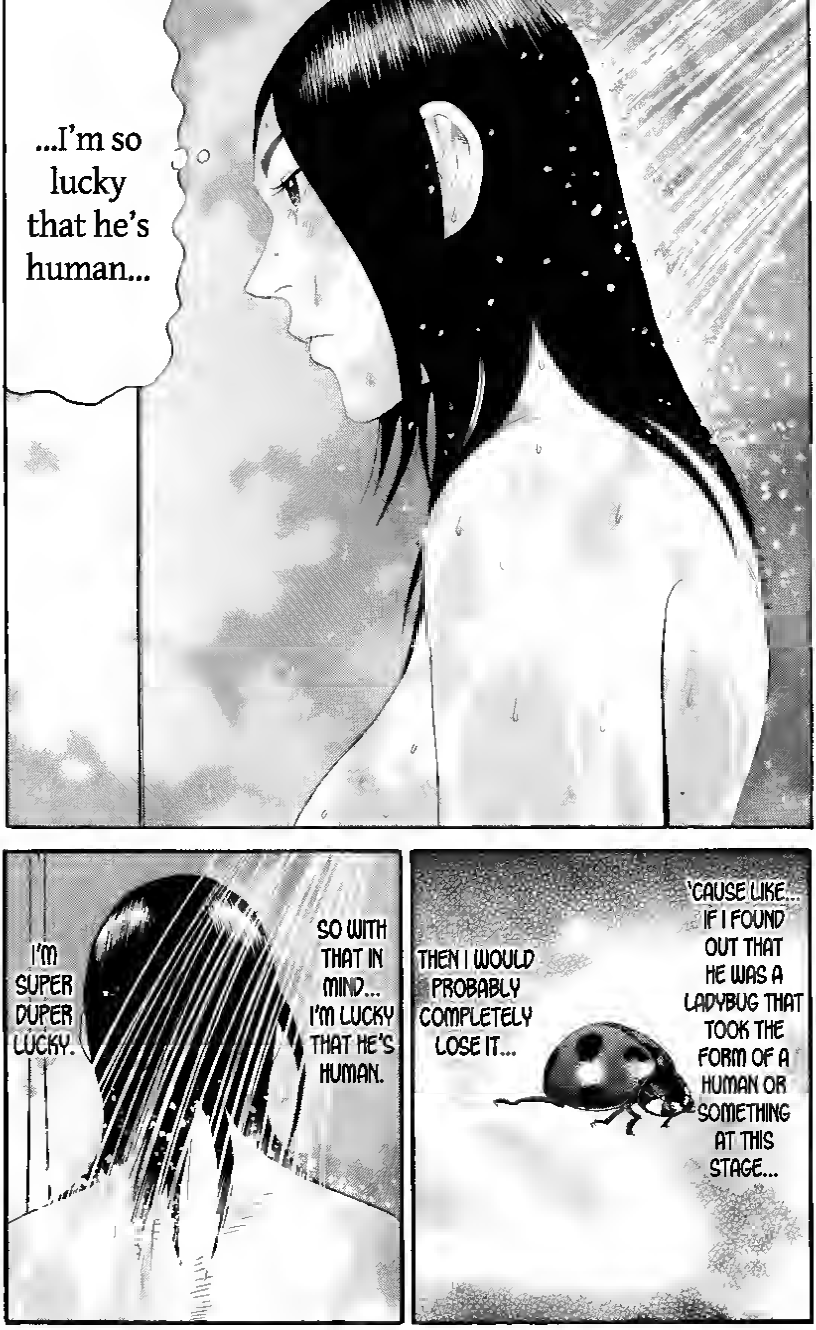

...I'm so lucky that he's human...
I'M SUPER DUPER LUCKY.
SO WITH THAT IN MIND... I'M LUCKY THAT HE'S HUMAN.
THEN I WOULD PROBABLY COMPLETELY LOSE IT...
'CAUSE LIKE... IF I FOUND OUT THAT HE WAS A LADYBUG THAT TOOK THE FORM OF A HUMAN OR SOMETHING AT THIS STAGE...

Oh! He's home!!
CREAK
So from now on, I'm not allowed to spend the entire day worrying about this anymore! This is driving me completely stupid!!
So that should mean it's really not a big deal if he's a homo or anything, right!? I mean, it's completely trivial!!
HUH!?
SLAM!!
I'd like to just do things by myself like I always used to, but..
Hrmghnn.. Am I really okay with this? Do I really want to be together with them?
HEY THERE...
HAA
HAA
H...

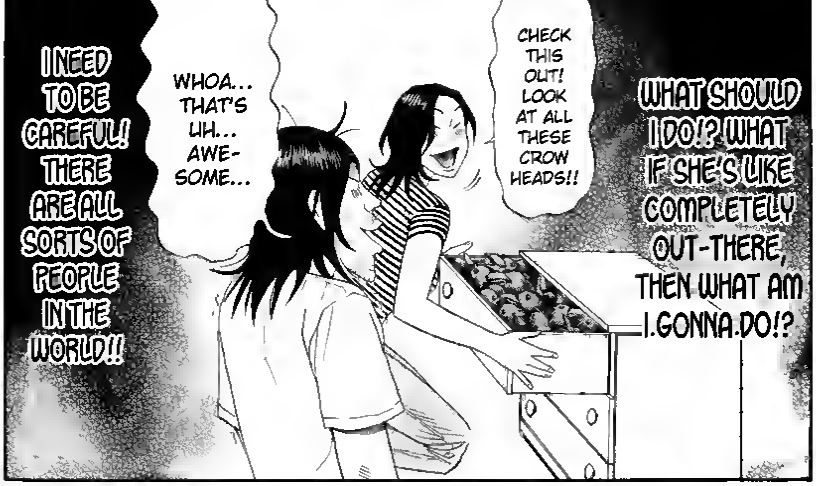
.. UH... UHMM,
W... Why's she dripping wet?
OH... HELLO...
TO BE YOUR FRIEND.. A FRIEND THAT YOU COULD.. TALK ABOUT LIFE WITH...
SO, WHAT ENDED UP HAPPENING? ..DID YOU FIND ANYONE?
HUH? ... ANYONE TO DO WHAT?
...WHAT ABOUT ME?
HUH?
IT LOOKED KINDA IMPOSSIBLE, SO.. I'VE PRETTY MUCH GIVEN UP
OH, YEAH... UH, I JUST RECENTLY REALIZED HOW RIDICULOUSLY DIFFICULT THAT SORT OF THING IS...

I'D REALLY LIKE TO BE ABLE TO JUST TALK MY HEAD OFF ABOUT ALL SORTS OF DIFFERENT THINGS WITH YOU...

NO... IT'S NOT LIKE WE WOULDN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO TALK ABOUT...
...ER, SO IS THAT A NO...? CAUSE YOU WOULDN'T REALLY HAVE MUCH TO TALK ABOUT WITH A GIRL OR SOME-THING?

HUH? ...YOU WANT TO BE FRIENDS WITH ME, HANEDA-SAN?

HUH?
ERHM....


I NEED TO BE CAREFUL! THERE ARE ALL SORTS OF PEOPLE IN THE WORLD!!
WHOA... THAT'S UH... AWE-SOME...
CHECK THIS OUT! LOOK AT ALL THESE CROW HEADS!!
WHAT SHOULD I DO!? WHAT IF SHE'S LIKE COMPLETELY OUT-THERE, THEN WHAT AM I GONNA DO!?

REALLY HAPPY.
BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, SHE'S SO PRETTY... IF I COULD BE FRIENDS WITH HER THAT'D MAKE ME HAPPY.

IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO MOVE! MOVE OUT!
BANG
BANG
BANG
SHE'S MY NEIGHBOR TOO! I WON'T BE ABLE TO GET AWAY FROM HER! I WOULDN'T EVEN BE ABLE TO PRETEND I WASN'T AT HOME!!
UGH-HHH

W...Why's he thinking so hard about this? What could be so bad about it!!?
HRM-GHMM...
Arghhhh, this is so hard... This is such a difficult situation...

Wanitokagegisu

To be continued
in volume 2

あなたは、この本を読んで、どんな感想をおもちになりましたか。

編集部ではこの本についての読者のみなさまのご意見をおまちしています。

このつぎには、どんな作家のどんな漫画を読みたいとお考えですか。「ヤンマガKC」にしてほしいと思う作品がありましたら、「読後の感想」とあわせて、左記あてに、どしどしお知らせください。

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ヤンマガKC係

※なお、お送りいただいたお手紙・おハガキは、ご記入いただいた個人情報を含めて著者にお渡しすることがありますので、あらかじめご了解のうえ、お送りください。

（ヤングマガジン2006年第17号〜第28号の掲載分を収録しました。）

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The name of the series, "Wanitokagegisu", is the Japanese name for "Stomiiformes", which is an order of deep-sea ray-finned fish of very diverse morphology. It includes for example dragonfish, lightfish, loosejaws, marine hatchetfish and viperfish. The order contains 4 families (5 according to some authors) with more than 50 genera and almost 400 species. As usual for deep-sea fish, there are few common names for species of the order, but the Stomiiformes as a whole are often called dragonfish and allies or simply stomiiforms.

Time for another Furuya Minoru series. This was only possible thanks to *laika*, who offered to translate it for us. There's no telling if we'll be able to finish this series or even if it will be updated regularly, but only time will tell.

This series will only be released in volume form, so expect long breaks between releases. And do NOT expect or ask for any other series to be done like this. We're only doing this for the series because I've always wanted to do volume releases and this is actually how laika usually does things. Enjoy the volume for now.

RAWS:	INTERNET
TRANSLATION:	LAIKA
CLEANS:	CRAZY_HORSE
REDRAWS (SOME):	KYUUBI654
TYPESETTING:	CRAZY_HORSE
QC:	LAIKA